more than a thousand of them who have been converted to the Hindu religion. 162 (797)

This group of people possesses the possibility of expansion, since they have at their disposal within the area of the Khasi and Jaintia Mountains a territory of 6,022 English square miles, with only 40 persons per square mile. Although wide areas are not built up and the system of shifting fields prevents the full utilization of the land, it is still true that with this small population figure by far the largest part of the whole population (200,781) is dependent on agriculture; trade and manufacturing only play a subordinate part. [311]

With regard to the division of the sexes, the two large religions of Assam, Hinduism and Mohammedanism, show the same proportion as in the rest of India, a lesser number of women than men. But among the Khasi the women are more numerous than the men. In the Brahmaputra valley with its greater Hindu population there are only 892 women for every 1,000 men; in the Surma valley, with a greater Moslem element, there are 937. But the situation is reversed among the Khasi, where there is a surplus of 74 women for every thousand men. The position of the women is basically different among this people. It is based on the customs and usages of maternal rights that prevail among them, which are predominantly based on possession and which find honorable expression in possession. 562 162

1. Property Rights in the Family Property.

The great principle which governs property among the Khasi, is that all family property rests in the hands /128: A/ /Fig. 1. Khasi Girls and Women with their Carrying Baskets. Fig. 2. An Old Clan Mother in the Village Laitumkhra./ /128: B/ /Fig. 3. At the Oracle of Egg Throwing/. Fig. 5. Khasi Girls and Men in Festive Dance Clothing./ /128: C/ /Fig. 4. A Group of Synteng/ /128: D/ Fig. 6. A Holy Grove and Part of the Village Raliang/ /129/ of the women and not of the man. The man can never be the owner of family property, and it can never be transferred to him. He may perhaps acquire some property through his own industry and work, but even that will pass into feminine hands by the path of inheritance. The concept of family is not as narrowly drawn here as in our country. This is a question of the clan-family, the clan. The head of it is always the youngest daughter, who, even when she has become old, bears the honorable name ka barit in the Jaintia Mountains, and in the Khasi Mountains ka khadduh, the last, the youngest. Around her gather her nearest blood relatives, brothers and sisters, and children. For example let 421 613 596 613 596

613 us take such a clan mother with the name Ka Sing Lau. She has two
596 sons and five daughters, and in addition two brothers and two sisters who are all married. Also each of the five daughters and two sisters has four children. These forty-six people live with the clan mother
[592] and form the family clan of the Lau. To these we also add the sons and brothers, the nephews and grandsons, but not their children. The latter have nothing to do with the family Lau but belong to the family clan of their wives, live with that clan and are counted in it. Likewise neither the husband of Ka Sing Lau, nor the husbands of the various daughters, sisters, nieces, and granddaughters belong here. They are all counted with their own clans, live and work with them according to Khasi custom, and only visit their wives occasionally perhaps after dark.

621 The entire clan-family of Lau is housed in 5 or 6 huts, which all
351 stand next to each other in a semicircle or are built one above the other on the slope of a hill, according to the character of the land. A
[241] garden frequently surrounds them in which maize, sweet potatoes, potato-like roots of Soh-ot and Schrut, bananas and, on the southern slopes of the Khasi Mountains, also coffee, pineapples, and other fruits are cultivated. A circle of bamboo cane that is so important for building purposes, household objects, and /130/ implements surrounds the garden and huts. This bamboo cane grows up as thick as an arm to a height of 10 or 15 meters and at the same time forms a good protection against bad weather. A wall (morscha) of thrown-up earth encloses everything, forming an enclosed farm, prevents unimpeded access, and protects cattle and crops from the attacks and devastations of wild animals.

423 What is considered the family property of such a clan? Primarily it is the land, the gardens, the rice fields, woods, fallow mountain
[241] and grazing lands. On the southern slopes of the Khasi Mountains there are fields for the cultivation of rape, orange groves, laurel groves, plantations of betel palms and of pepper leaves which far and wide are so highly treasured for betel chewing as a source of pleasure. (2)

2. Cf. Becker, Im Stromtal des Brahmaputra, /In the River Valley of the Brahmaputra/ (Munich, 1923). pp. 357 ff.

[311] Usually there is so much land available that the family-clan can nourish itself properly and also increase in number

423 According to its size and wealth a family clan also owns a
231 corresponding number of cows, oxen, hens, pigs, and goats. Neither the milk nor the flesh of the cows is used. They are kept for the

423 manure, and primarily for breeding, since the oxen cannot be dis-
231 pensed with for the cultivation of the fields, especially of the rice fields, where the soaked earth must be trampled to a slimy mush. From the fowl the eggs are particularly prized, since they find an almost daily use in the questioning of oracles in cases of misfortune and sickness. (3) Hens, pigs and goats serve for sacrificial purposes, (4)

3. P.R.T. Gurdon, The Khasis, (London 1907) pp. 221 ff.; Becker, "Das Eierwerfen der Khasi," /Egg throwing Among the Khasi/, Anthropos, Vols. 12-13 (Vienna, 1917-18), pp. 494 ff.; P. F. Stegmiller, "Aus dem religiösen Leben der Khasi" /The Religious Life of the Khasi/ Anthopos Vol. 16-17 (1921-1922), pp. 418 ff.

4. Becker, "Die Nongrem-Puja in den Khasi-Bergen" /The Nongkrem Puja in the Khasi Mountains/, Anthropos, Vol. 4, (Vienna, 1909) No. 5-6, pp. 898 ff.; Stegmiller, loc cit.

and they are also a welcome addition to rice at all festive occasions such as arrow shooting, (5) at the name giving, /131/ at weddings,

5. Becker, Im Stromtal etc., /In the Valley, etc./, pp. 298 and 387.

and at the cremation of the dead.

421 Further the various huts belong to the family property, the erec-
● 613 tion and maintenance of which is the work of the members of the clan, the brothers, nephews, and grandsons. The hut of the clan mother is likewise considered the center of the whole family, and its possession forms the outer sign of the dominance of the clan mother. Here she holds the family sacrifices and also keeps the special treasures. These are considered to be those things which are connected with the religious cult. Special reverence and sacrifice is due the oldest clan mother, as the original founder of the clan, and her brother in each clan family; in addition there are a series of other spirits which vary according to the family clan. The branch of the Khasi people who live in the Jaintia Mountains, the so-called Synteng, have probably pre-
776 served the old Khasi customs the most faithfully. There in the hut of the
778 clan mother are found the following utensils for the service of the divinities, who are nearly always feminine: mats, little baskets for rice, gourd bottles, a little basket made of bamboo cane and decorated with feathers, as well as antlers of deer or antelopes. The latter are fastened to the wall: they are supposed to be the seat of the

could not prevent individuals from becoming needy through misfortune or laziness and their trying to rent a part of their property for an annual payment or for a sum needed once. This is called ban die pan, literally: begging to buy. The sense of relinquishing by lending /133/ is contained in this. For example, a field is worth 300 reichsmarks. Fifty or 100 reichsmarks are accepted for it and the creditor remains the owner of the field until the money is repaid. This type of purchase occurs frequently. There are frequently traders (nongkhaii) who try to use such purchases to their own advantage. They turn over the field to the debtor for further cultivation in return for payment in produce of 50 to 70 per cent of the harvest. After several years the whole field is their property. Aside from this method, it also happens that instead of being able to repay the money the people need still further sums. In that case then the entire price of 300 reichsmarks is paid and the actual purchase is considered completed; that is called ban die lut; literally: totally, completely sold. A family-clan which gradually loses its property in this manner descends into poverty and need. There is nothing else for it to do than to look for work elsewhere, to rent land or to sell the children as a kind of slaves to better situated people. If 40 reichsmarks are paid for a child of about 10 years, he remains in the bondage of the buyer until the money can be repaid. That happens only rarely. Besides food and the most necessary clothing only one rupee is deducted annually as wage from the purchase price; thus, practically, the child belongs to the buyer for the duration of his life.

421 425 [567]

It is the duty of individual members of a family clan to work together so that the clan property will be maintained and will produce the necessary amount for the maintenance of all. The clan mother must oversee primarily that the appropriate customs and usages are preserved. She is held in high esteem by all. To do something against her wish to offend her, to call her insulting names, or to go so far as to strike her is considered sang (taboo), a severe crime that causes misfortune. It is a great sin (pop) and a thoroughly great disgrace (sngewsih eh tam) for the whole clan.(7) As long as a member

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7. Also considered similar crimes are selling clan property in secret, incest, desecrating burial places in a coarse manner, making use of holy grounds or woods.

/134/ of the family has committed such a crime and has not begged pardon from the clan mother and the elders of the clan, perhaps with the words: pardon me, I have committed an error (to map ia nga leh

613 bakla); and as long as the expiatory sacrifice, in the form of pigs and
698 goats, determined by the elders of the family and by the sacrificial
682 priest (lyngdoh) has not been offered, the sinning member is considered excluded from the family and the family sacrifices. But even after being accepted again a certain stain still clings to him.

613 But it is also the duty of the clan mother to care for the needs of the members of her family clan with regard to food, clothing, and the like. She divides the fruits of the harvests according to the needs of the individual. She goes or sends to market to trade, to buy, or to sell. She takes care of the common purse and even the masculine members of the clan have to ask her for money when they wish to drink rice liquor or buy clothing. There the clan mother is generous
[662] rather than niggardly. This dependent relationship of the men is not considered unworthy at all or shameful. It is the matriarchal form and ancient custom. Nevertheless, the position of the men in the family clan is an esteemed one. Even the name they are called by has an important sound: Rangbah, Basan (oldest ones, advisers). On them falls often the work in the field and wood or the protection of the family; bow and arrow are handed to them as cradle gifts. In the more important family matters the clan mother consults with them. At the giving of the name, during a wedding, a funeral, or cremation the clan mother steps almost completely into the background, also during quarrels and court hearings before the chief (Doloi) or king (S'iem). She is still always influential with her advice, but the actual appearance, activity and judgments is the business of the men. The smaller,
[782] everyday sacrifices she performs in the clan hut; but she can also let these /135/ be performed by her sons. At larger sacrificial ceremonies which are offered by several family clans at the same time, by whole
[793] villages or even by one of the Khasi states, only the men are active as sacrificial priests.

613 With regard to the husbands of the clan mother and of the feminine
596 members, they are not considered members of the family clan of the women at all. They are only considered the begetters. They work and live in their own clan, participate in their sacrifices and burial places. The father has no further influence in the raising of the children, who belong entirely to the clan of the mother. But usually they have no obligation, unless the wife and children are impoverished. Even then their care comes in second place after that of members of their own
[593] clan. Nevertheless the husband is honored and is addressed by "Mr." (kynrad) by his wife. She would consider it disgraceful to approach him impertinently. Where the property of a clan has been dissolved or Christian customs introduced, the husband lives and works together with his wife and children.

presentation of the written statement of the chieftain and the village elders that they would have no objection to it. The avaricious renter of the divine land mentioned above was despised by all. 423 784 797

As concerns the holy forests, which often extend picturesquely from the highest peak down the slope and are overgrown with gnarled oaks and bright colored rhododendron, no tree may be felled there; at the most, fallen wood or wood torn down by a storm or already rotten wood may be taken. The spirits of the forest, as punishing gods, will revenge every offense. Tigers and leopards, apes, bears, and snakes enjoy an undisturbed existence here. The only case in which wood may be cut in these divine woods is for the religious cremation ceremonies of the dead. It is the custom of the Khasi to set fire often to great areas in order to fertilize the ground with the ashes of grasses, trees, and shrubs without regard for the new growth of trees, and to make potato fields there for a year or two or to grow mountain rice, millet, or something similar and then to leave the field fallow again. Thus this is a clever precautionary rule, since there might otherwise be cases when there might be no wood for cremating the dead. 778 776 [764] [241]

(Continuation follows)

/300/ Family Property and Maternal Rights
by C. Becker S.D.S., Würzburg

Gurdon says, (10) that these holy groves were formerly the property of a village. That is not always so as the following case will demonstrate. I am also relating this because it grants us a deeper look into the whole customs of the clan under discussion. 779 423 613 797

10. The Khasis, p. 87.

Several decades ago, a Khasi who had become a Protestant, U Jacob Shai by name, was installed as a clerk with the English government official in Jowai. In order to assure his family a better living than just his meager salary, he yearned for land. By birth from Jongushen in the War territory, he remembered that he could obtain his aim in the neighboring village Syndai from the family clan Umliang. So one day he went thither. After the customary greetings, and refreshment with a water pipe and betel nut and conversation about various indifferent matters, he mentioned his desire. "I know," he said in the polite language of even these simple natural men, "I know the goodness and the good name of your clan /Stamm/ and the elders

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of your clan; you are glad to come to the help of others everywhere and thereby have prepared honor and fame for your whole clan /Sippe/, for your clan gods and goddesses, and for your ancestors of both sexes. You are blessed with grandchildren and great grandchildren. I rejoice in your good fortune and I wish that the gods and goddesses of your clan /Stamm/ will be favorably inclined for all times. Therefore I dare to come to you and to make a request of you; I have only one request: nga don tang kawei ka jingkyrpad! Namely, I need a piece of land, so that I can give my grandsons and granddaughters something to eat. My own field does not suffice for so many mouths. I have noticed that a piece of forest lies here /301/ unused. I have inquired to whom it belongs and the village elders said to me that it was the property of the famous family clan Umliang. I honor you, therefore, and beg you: can I receive this forest according to the law and custom of the clan?"

Questions from the clan mother and the family elders followed this speech. Finally it was clear to them what piece was meant. "That is the khlau sang, the forest of the gods," they cried. "Certainly that belongs to our clan property, but as you yourself know, we can neither rent nor sell it. We cannot and do not even dare say, cultivate the land. But we also cannot prevent you from doing it or forbid you. That piece of land is presented to the gods; they will revenge themselves on anyone who removes it from their cult; they themselves will guard over it so that no one will seize it."

This answer satisfied U Shai completely. He had no fear of the punishment of the forest gods; he had just wanted to make certain whether the family clan would put difficulties in his way or would even bring complaints before the English government. The forest was soon arable. Fire transformed the wood and the bushes, the high grasses and the vines into ashes; oranges and lemons, pineapples, and bananas were planted and after a few years the land brought in from the sale of the fruit a sum, considerable for those conditions, of 800 to 1,000 reichsmarks a year.

The family clan Umliang was still faithful to their native faith. As the other heathen did, so they observed the undertaking of U Shai with fear and anxiety. They believed the gods must bestir themselves and the forest would devour the miscreant with his family. That did not occur. It could not be avoided that in this way the belief in their gods and native customs received a jolt among the heathen and many of them went over to the viewpoint that they might also do it.

After a while a young Khasi with such advanced views married /302/ into the family clan Umliang. Meanwhile 40 years had passed. The old father U Shai was already dead. The piece of land planted by him, as it was not actually family property, according to the special customs of the War had passed on not only to the youngest daughter but also to his son Jacob U Shai and his sisters. On their side they had helped their father in the clearing of the forest. The siblings were Catholic. The young man mentioned above brought a legal complaint against the siblings before the English government official in Jowai a few years ago: the forest made arable by Jacon U Shai and transformed into a fruit orchard had been illegally acquired and is the property of the clan of his wife; he demanded a piece of the land back for the family Umliang and for the other piece a corresponding annual rent must be paid.

In reply the siblings Shai could claim that the affair was past the legal time limit. According to tribal custom the time limit on small matters was 10 years, for greater matters 30 years. In addition the main point on their side was that the piece of land in question was lehlan sang, forest of the gods, and the family Umliang could not ask anything for it. For this the Shai siblings lacked witnesses, whereas the Umliangs produced several heathen witnesses for the simple declaration of the right of possession. The case was long drawn out. It was finally decided against the Shai siblings and they were declared deprived of the property. The missionary P. Benedikt Neher now concerned himself with the affair. He brought more than 100 witnesses, all clan mothers or village elders, who were ready to swear that that piece of land was a forest of the gods as long as man could remember. The English judge, whom he informed of this, decided that this was a basis for proposing a revision and change of the judgment, but the Shai siblings had lost all their money in the previous trial to pettifogging lawyers and did not have the spirit to begin again. With oriental equanimity they accepted the loss and thus the affair remained.

/303/ The case is instructive anyway, insofar as it shows that the so-called holy forests are also found in the possession of individual family clans; how they are valued by them as long as they remain faithful to their animistic views and how they are able to make their right of possession to them valid even after years.

### 3. Customs Concerning the Right of Inheritance

When the clan mother dies, the youngest daughter always receives the inheritance among the Khasi. If for any reason the youngest daughter cannot take possession, her next youngest sister follows. If there are

428 613 no girls, only sons, the inheritance passes to the youngest daughter of the sister of the deceased clan mother. If there are no such sisters or if they have no daughters, the nearest, youngest female relative is next in line. If she has not lived in the family clan of the deceased up to now, she must first spend at least 3 months in the hut of the clan mother in order to be able to enter into her rights and duties. In such cases usually the successor to the office is taken into the hut previously by the clan mother and prepared for the later activity. It can happen that the successor is not even 13 years old and therefore is not of age and capable of marrying. In this case the mother or a sister of the deceased clan mother manages the rule and the household until the majority of the inheritress. But even as a child the latter has the honored name mother; she is called kmie or kmie san.

The great principle, which determines all conditions of inheritance, is that the sons and husbands are excluded from all family property, which is always passed on to the girls, the female world. But what if a fellow or a man creates or acquires property? The case is possible and also occurs.

428 556 /304/ As mentioned, each person must help with the work in his own family clan in order to have a claim on care from the common property. Between sowing the rice and the harvest and other possible common labors there are still many days and weeks. Instead of [414] spending these with archery, hunting or the popular khong kai, or loafing around, a young man can earn money by cutting wood for others and carrying loads for native traders or also for Europeans, since in the mountains nearly everything has to be carried on the back. He can also do work in the fields or gardens for pay for others outside his clan or carry on a small trade by buying wares at the market such as dried fish, betel nuts, pepper leaves and such, and carrying them a few days' journey away to the markets in the interior of the mountains where these items are not otherwise available and selling them there for a profit. What the man earns in this fashion is his property and is not counted as part of the clan property. An industrious man can thus gradually earn enough money to rent a rice field. Through sale of the surplus crop, he will finally have enough so that he is able to buy a rice field himself, which is also his property. If such a man dies unmarried, the inheritance passes 429 to his mother. If he is married then he can, if he wishes, found a clan property for his family who may be poor and without property. The property will then pass to the youngest daughter and be passed on then in the usual manner of inheritance. Thus everything finally

returns to the hands of the women. 423

The following example may explain the customs involved here and further sift them out even though it scarcely throws a pleasant light on the dimensions which have been introduced among the Khasi people as a result of the divisions of the various Christian religions which are striving for their conversion.

In the village Kyndongtupér, a man had gradually acquired some property for himself with 15 oxen and cows, /30$/ a decent hut and furnishings and 3 beautiful rice fields, large enough to sustain a family clan. After his death the youngest daughter of his sister, named Ka Pliang Shai Syndúr, was considered the valid heiress. She was still under age and her mother was already dead. As a result a sister of this mother, named Ka Pliang Shai (1)took over the management

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11. Pan and Syndur are Khasi names; Pliang Shai is the name of the family, clan; literal meaning: shining plate.

of the inheritance and lived with the little heiress in the clan hut. There was no doubt that the latter would receive the entire property after she reached her majority. After a while, a young Catholic, U Salomon Taruh, wooed for Syndúr's hand. Thereupon the older siblings, a brother and a sister, both of whom belonged to the Methodist Church, became enraged. In spite of all the hostility, the young girl stuck to her decision, married Taruh and became Catholic. The young married couple had to flee from the clan hut because of the anger of the siblings. The latter sought to have the sister disinherited, but the other relatives involved would have nothing to do with this. They were so carried away by their anger that they did what was considered a crime even in the eyes of the heathen: they drove the cattle away secretly and sold it; likewise they cleared out the clan hut and even sold two rice fields. On complaint to the competent court, Syndúr was finally granted her right; she could take over the clan hut and the family property which was meanwhile greatly diminished.

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Although the Khasi who have been converted to Christianity do not need to be bound by the laws of succession in inheritance and although this is often recognized by the heathen Khasi, there is no hindrance put in their way by the Catholic Church to following their native tribal customs in this matter. The Catholic Khasi themselves do not wish to deviate from them: /30$/ a dogged attachment to ancient customs and a respect for them are in their blood. Here are a few examples.

In Nongkah the Catholic clan mother ka Johanna Synah, wife of U Andreas Tubru, died without leaving any female descendants. It would

have been understood if the only son U Johannes Sunah, according to the ruling custom of Christians elsewhere, had claimed the considerable inheritance of rice fields, forest, and huts. A serious objection would not have been expected either from the officials or the relatives. Johannes was also spoken to about it in this fashion, but in vain. He could not conquer the inner revulsion of acting against ancient tribal customs for a temporal advantage. His simple answer was: "If I am a good Catholic, God will bless me in other ways without my going against our ancient customs." And so matters stood. The whole property went to the youngest daughter of the sister of the deceased; this branch of the family was still heathen. Through industry and economy Johannes finally acquired his own household with a goodly piece of land.

The Catholic Khasi even get rid of possessions readily which they already possess if the tribal customs demand it. It happened unfortunately several years ago that both the wife of the chief teacher of the Catholic Khasi public school in Shillong, U Thomas Sylliet, as well as the wife of the cook of the mission station there, U Sebastian Shiah, were both carried away by death within a short time. Both men had acquired very nice property by their industry. According to Khasi law they had no further claims on their children who were still quite small. They belonged to the clan of their deceased wives and had to be taken by them and raised. According to Khasi law, the property that they had acquired also passed to the youngest daughter. Willingly each of them handed over the children and the interim management of the property to the relatives of the deceased wives, took the few clothes and purely personal possessions /307/ with them and sought to begin again from the beginning in the ruined half of a hut. To my question, whether that had been hard for them, they answered with quiet matter-of-fairness: "But that is the custom among us Khasi."

It is not necessary to emphasize especially that such respect for the tribal customs has made only a favorable impression on the Khasi who are still heathen.

Gurdon relates (13) that the clan mother loses her position in the

13. The Khasis, p. 93.

family when she changes her religion, for example at her conversion to Christianity, and that the youngest daughter takes her place. The justification for this lies in the fact that she then no longer belongs to the religion and cannot offer the customary family sacrifices.

Because of her whole position as guardian of the inherited religion and customs, it is not frequent that such a woman breaks with the ancestor cult. If this does happen, it does not necessarily mean that she loses the entire property. That depends really on the position the other members of the family take. If they are all still firm heathens, who wish to have nothing to do with Christianity, they can force the clan mother to give everything up. The high respect for her is frequently so great, however, that either the whole clan or at least a part of it decides to take the same step and change religions with the clan mother. The part that remains heathen will certainly propose a division of the family property. This is also possible in other cases. 429 613 797 671

4. Division of the Family Property.

Although it is rare, the weal and woe of a family-clan can require that a family-clan be split into two clans /Clan/ and that a division of the common property be undertaken. The basis for this is if the family /Geschlecht/ becomes too big, if the elders in the family council /308/ are no longer united and hate and revenge threaten to destroy, if a part of the clan /Clan/ tries to seize the better fields by violence and refuses to deliver the harvest for the common need, if one branch has brought the whole clan /Sippe/ dishonor and shame by false oaths, incest, revenge, treachery or some other severe crime. Only the guilty party will be excluded from the clan /Clan/ in such cases, if he remains stubborn and impenitent. But if he begs for forgiveness with his lips and participates in the expiatory sacrifice, forgiveness will not be refused him. But a certain inner tension and bad feeling often remain behind. 613 578 688

At the conversion to another religion, it often depends on how the clan mother and also the family elders are inclined towards the religion in question, and also on who is changing religions. If it is only brothers, sons, nephews, or grandsons, of the clan mother, a division is out of the question, since the men are not capable of inheriting. But if it is the youngest or next youngest daughter or even the sister of the clan mother, then a division of property can be undertaken. A clan mother after all is so attached to her child or her nearest blood relatives that she would not like to push them entirely away from herself unless she were completely set against the religion in question and angered. If that should be so in individual cases, the heiress concerned will still consider, whether it is not more advisable to wait to change her religion until the clan mother has closed her eyes and she then has free play. Then that which was mentioned at the conclusion of the previous section can occur. 797 428 425 613

425 If after discussions lasting weeks all the problems involved have
643 been settled, the agreements decided on are finally completed with
the customary ceremonial. It was mentioned above, what objects
[72] for the religious cult are to be found in the hut of the clan mother.
The little basket plaited of bamboo cane, which is considered the
special seat of the divine ancestors of the clan, /Clan/ is not divided.
/309/ Another, similar basket is made. By sacrifice of goats and pigs,
these divinities are then entreated so that a part of them may take up
their dwelling in this basket for the protection of the newly constructed
clan. If the sacrificial priest can announce the agreement of the de-
ceased spirits with the division from the oracle of the entrails of the
animals and by egg throwing, then this basket is brought to the new
clan hut. On another day one of the two hearthut poles is then taken
for the new hut with further sacrifices. Each of the two separated
parties must fetch a new pole to go with the other one. In a like way the
existent sacrificial utensils, such as rice baskets, mats, and gourd bot-
tles are divided. With this ceremony the agreements made about the
division of the other property are considered legally existent. Each party
now goes his own way independent of the other. Certain relationships of
[582] friendship and kinship still remain in existence, however, the bar to
marriage, which otherwise would make impossible the marriage between
members of the same family clan without regard to the degree of re-
lationship, is no longer in existence.

425 If, at the conversion of one part of the members of the clan to
797 the Christian religion, the division of property can be accomplished
796 legally, it is better to insist on it. The members who have become
Christian are more readily protected from disadvantageous treatment.
Even if they should take part of the fields for themselves in separate
management, the part of the clan that remained heathen could de-
mand this back years later. Enmity, hate, and revenge would
then follow. Without the formal ceremony combined with the
sacrifices mentioned a Khasi does not recognize a division as
legal. Since Christians cannot participate in such a sacrificial
ceremony, there is nothing to do other than to have this ceremony
undertaken while those seeking to be baptized are still catechumens.
Before they are accepted then into the church by baptism, the
heathen cult objects that were brought into the clan hut must be re-
moved. "To /310/ this most important ceremony, "the missionary
of the Synteng territory, P. Benedikt Huber S. D. S., once related,
"I usually went myself if it was possible for me to or sent a European
sister of the Order. Thereby the ceremony acquired a great deal
[[see category file, pp 4.5 — Ann Lyon]]

13:Mukherjee E-5 (1954)1958 ASI Khasi ASI



The primal father and the mother of the members of every clan are respectively known as *U-Pawad* (*U-Thawlang*) and *Ka-Siawad* (*Ka Lawbei*).

There is a large number of clans among the Khasis and some of the clan names are those of animals and trees. *Shriah* is monkey, *thaw*, a crab, and *diengkhih*, a tree ; yet they do not constitute totemic clan organization. The clan names are not even the names of the ancestors. The clans are not ancestral but rather were territorial in nature when the clansmen (*shi-Kur*) used to live in a place having a common land (*ri-kur*) and a clan cemetery (*mawbah*) where the bones of the dead clansmen were deposited.

Unlike the clans, the sub-clans (*ka-Ji'juh*) are ancestral. As for example, in case of the *Siem* clan of the Cleves state, it is found that Ka-Khiem was the primal ancestress. Her daughter Ka-Pet had three daughters, namely, Ka-Jingi, Ka-Langen, and Ka-Kynh each of whom is regarded as the *Ka-Ki' juh* (meaning womb) of their respective descendants who are *shi-Ki'juh* (the members of the same womb). And their names are the names of the three sub-clans of the *siem* clan.

The names of the sub-clans of some of the clans as collected from the elderly Khasi women are given below.

| CLAN | SUB-CLAN |
|---|---|
| 1. *Siem* | = *ingi* ; *langen*, *kynh* |
| 2. *Khongsit* | = *jhi* ; *phai* ; *lur* ; *jhuw* |
| 3. *Khonshing* | = *kur* ; *mak* ; *mynsiar*, *kmaw* |
| 4. *Lyngdoh* | = *lukas* ; *mawsiah* ; *kmaw* |
| 5. *Mawrie* | = *langam* ; *langrei* ; *synjan* ; *kulai* |
| 6. *Khongwet* | = *thaiti* ; *thaw* ; *kulai* ; *thi* |
| 7. *Jaitkhar* | = *kmi* ; *kma* , *wit* ; *tula* |
| 8. *Mawphlang* | = *ali* ; *mayon* ; *jait* , *wai* |

Family (*ka-Jing*) among the Khasis is the socio-economic and religious unit. Due to matrilineal residence, the structure of the Khasi families assumes a different form. The constituent members are the grandmother, her daughters and their children. But the permanent[1] residents are the youngest daughter (*ka-Khadduh*), her husband and daughters. It takes on

[1] [Should read: permanent. — Ananya]

extended form more often when the children of the deceased sisters of *Ka-Khaddah* reside there. This extension is on the mother's side and is affiliated through the extension of mother-child relationship.

Additional members like widower brothers or widowed sisters make the Khasi family a composite one.

In a Khasi family father, mother and her brother are very important. Father who is regarded as *Myndur* (stranger) or *Usbong kha* (begetter), has also the position of *Kynrad* (master) of the house (set-up by him). He is the executive head and the mother is the *de jure* owner of the household.

Modern conditions and spread of Christianity have greatly affected the Khasi society and changed the Khasi ways of life but have failed to alter the traditional mode of inheritance even among the Christian Khasis. Another important fact which is apparent in the Khasi families, is the change of the status of the mother's brother (*Ubaid*) in his sister's house. His influence has greatly been diminished due to clash with *Ka-Khaddah* (Saiwan). He has almost lost his control over his sister's family. This has made the women exert their status to a deeper point. Consequently, some amount of maladjustment in the relationship system, moral depravity and disintegration loom large in the family horizon.

Family in the core of Khasi social organization and the closeness of familial kin with the members of the sub-clan is due more to the fact that sub-clan owes its development to the family. A *Shi-K'pah* (member of sub-clan) is a secondary relative and can easily be approached for any help.

The functions of the above mentioned social groupings are as follows:

Clan (*Ka-Kur*)—It regulates marriage. It being a larger non-residential kin group contact between its members is infrequent. The amount of social participation needed to sustain bond to intensify the relationship among its members falls far short of. But sometimes, there existed among the members

[should read: regulated — Analyst]

13:Mukherjee E-5 (1954)1958 ART Khasi ART



of a clan some ceremonial attachment developed out of the custom of depositing the bones of the clansmen in clan ossuary and renewing the relationship between the clansmen on the ceremonial occasion of *thymmuhuh* when the bones were finally transferred from *mawshieng* (ossuary of a sub-clan) to *mawbah* (ossuary of a clan).

Social bond among the clansmen is due to the performance of common religious ceremonies (*khar*), worship of common deities and spirits of household (*Kwaidwia*), water (*jaw*) and hills (*Kwaidhem*) and observance of mourning for three days for the death of clansmen with the cessation of outdoor work specially with implements.

Economic bond among them is due further to the possession of common land (*rikhar*), which is divided into separate holdings held by families.

**Sub-clan (*Ka-Kpaw*)**—Unlike the clan, sub-clan has nothing to do with the regulation of marriage. Its main functions are socio-religious. Mutual interest in the welfare of the members of sub-clan evinced in the observance of *sdaw*[*] in honour of the dead grandmother, profound sentiment grows out of the former practice of depositing the bones of the dead persons of the same sub-clan in *mawshieng* and the responsibility of bearing the expenses for *thymmuhuh* bind the members together.

The observance of mourning on the death of a person of the same sub-clan for three days and the consequent

[*] Offering of food to the spirits of the dead ancestors.

13:Mukherjee E-5 (1954)1958 AR7 Khasi AR7



cessation of transaction of money (*khoimahei*) during the period, compulsory social participation in marriage, household worship, and funeral ritual, and the pride for the privilege in succession to *siem-ship* (chieftain ship) hold together the inner structure of the society in fulfilling its function.

*Family ( Ka-ïing )*—The functions of family centre round the :

1. performance of basic religious rites,
2. management and inheritance of family property,
3. maintenance of social relations with the kin of *ka-kʼjuh* and *ka-bor*,
4. protection of familial kin.

From the above discussions it may be inferred that the social groupings of the Khasis function in different dimensions and make the individuals aware of their duties, and obligations towards each other. In the process of socialisation and enculturation of the individual they learn that the individuals, the different social groups and the community at large are inseparable.

Even from infancy a boy is infused with the idea that family comes first in regard, sub-clan second, and clan third. The kin of the family are primary relatives, and those of the sub-clan and the clan are secondary and tertiary respectively. One bow and three arrows given by a father to his son in his naming ceremony (*jaikhaw*) symbolise their relationships with the three social groups. With the first arrow man has to fight for *shi-ïing* (members of the same family) and *shi-kʼjuh* (members of the same sub-clan), with the second for his *shi-bor* and with the third for the state.

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614 [765] [769] *mawbh* (grave stone), in which the bones of all the dead members are buried. When the *mawbh* becomes full, or some members move away to a considerable distance, they provide another branch *mawbh*, creating a new *kur*.[1] Thus in course of time, every older *kur* occasionally branches off. Every branch *kur* has a different name, but can be grouped into a major *kur* thus forming a distinct exogamous group. Relationships among the minor *kur* of one major *kur* are usually known, or can be ascertained, so that marriages among these members are avoided. When the Khasi express this kind of group consciousness, they use the term *jai* (own people). For outsiders, it is difficult to know through the names of minor *kur* whether *kur* A and *kur* B are of the same group or not.

However, neither clan solidarity nor corporative activities are found among the Khasi, except in those clans which are considered of higher status, and maintain a functional position in the political or religious fields. Such are the Siem of the ruling clan and the Ringdoh of the priest clan, etc. Among commoners like the villagers of Sohkynduh and Kongton, the importance of a *kur* is confined to recognizing a common ancestress, with a common *mawbh* conception, which requires them to maintain a strict exogamous rule. But whether of major or minor *kur*, its members do not meet together or have a common leader. Actually major *kur* of which there are a considerable number all over the Khasi Hills, have no clear-cut geographical distribution. Each is scattered over a wide area, cutting across territory which includes several villages, and mixing with various other *kur*. Indeed, some of them are very widely distributed geographically and found in almost all regions of the Khasi Hills. A minor *kur* is also scattered over many different villages, though it shows more concentration than the major one. Consequently a village may be composed of small segments [621] of more than a dozen different *kur*. Even these small segments of each *kur* found in a single village have little or no sense of kin-group solidarity, unless the members have quite close kinship ties. In many cases, though some members have the same *kur* name, their relationship may be distant, so that they cannot always reconstruct their genealogical relationship. In such a case their behaviour and attitude towards the same *kur* members and towards other *kur* members show no difference.

• 613 Individuals are not grouped actually under the name of *kur* but in a smaller group of matrilineal descendants from one great-grand-

[764] 1. The Khasi cremate dead bodies; bones and ashes are usually kept in a spot near the youngest sister's house which is the centre of a functional descent group, for many years and finally placed in the *mawbh* of the *kur*. They say that these bones are to be collected and replaced into the *mawbh* every hundred years with a great ceremony. However, none of villagers are certain about the year when the last ceremony was held.

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mother, for which unit the Khasi word *kpoh* is used. Such a group of matrilineal kin is usually confined to one domestic family or to a group of households, linked by direct extension of a main household. However, even this descent unit is not a single productive and consumer unit, though it may act as a religious unit, having common ancestral property. I shall take up this thread again at a later stage of my analysis.

Because of the lack of the functional lineage organization as a corporate unit, the village community becomes the significant unit as a higher level of organization than that of *kpoh*. This fact is supported by the high tendency to community endogamy which links every household of a village into a unit with considerable cohesion and solidarity. In fact the members of a village community are linked to each other in various ways by affinal or cognatic ties.

List 6. *House-owners and their Spouses of Sohkynduh.*

| *House-owner* | *Kur* | *Spouse* | *Kur* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Ruka | Puhsong | Suro | Prarian |
| 2. Shngiam | Puhsong | Nier | Riatam |
| 3. U Rabi | Prarian | | |
| 4. To | Prarian | Phaongrung | Dkhar |
| 5. Pho | Khongriah | Ser | Dkhar |
| 6. Dewli | Dkhar | Wen | Ksing |
| 7. Snoh | Khongbei | Hajur | Khongsit |
| 8. Kwaimai | Dkhar | Koshen | Kongjoh |
| 9. Ostti | Dkhar | Hajur | Khongsit |
| 10. Jeid | Khonglam | | |
| 11. Jun | Khonsidir | Using | Ksing |
| 12. Mo | Khongsidir | Kinhad | Khongbei |
| 13. U sil | Khongsidir | | |
| 14. Rapai | Khongbei | Soli | Shrieh |
| 15. Tngun | Khongmawpat | Tik | Prarian |
| 16. Step | Khongmawpat | Nowai | Ksing |
| 17. Phi | Khongsidir | Phein | Mawpat |
| 18. Khaila | Prarian | Sining | Mases |
| 19. Jop | Ksing | Syndro | Dkhar |
| 20. Khirt | Shrieh | Lait | Khongbei |
| 21. Pre | Prarian | Mon | Khongbei |
| 22. Kam | Khonsbei | Phen | Khongriah |
| 23. Lami | Prarian | Jam | Khongjilew |
| 24. Shaknai | Khongngain | Jeep | Dkhar |
| 25. Jin | Khongjilew | | |
| 26. Jemmud | Khonglam | Jonin | Riahtam |
| 27. Kilo | Dkhar | Mata | Khonglam |
| 28. Phimai | Riahtam | Rang | Dkhar |
| 29. Jak | Riahtam | Rabeaing | Tyngsong |
| 30. U Jin | Khonglam | | |
| 31. Khiri | Shrieh | Rising | Khonglam |
| 32. Sur | Kynshah | Jonin (ot) | Riahtam |

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| | *House-owner* | *Kur* | *Spouse* | *Kur* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | — | — | — | — |
| 33. | Ke | Khongsit | Beno | Khongriah |
| 34. | Hil | Khongjliew | Mudui | Majaw |
| 35. | Erisa | Riahtam | Jen | Khongji |
| 36. | Eli | Khongsit | Khang | Khongshei |
| 37. | Ede | Khongsit | Berod | Riahtam |
| 38. | Keril | Shrieh | Kowai | Khongsit |
| 39. | He | Khongsit | Dek | Mawpat |
| 40. | Phro | Dkhar | Dakhil | Prarian |
| 41. | Shugal | Khonglam | Jran | Prarian |
| 42. | Ieitmon | Tham | Kop | Khongsidir |
| 43. | Prsiang | Khongsit | Miton | Khongngain |
| 44. | Pjah | Shirieh | | |
| 45. | Lhi | Prarian | | |
| 46. | Libon | Kynshah | Synbo | Dkhar |
| 47. | Kweit | Tham | Horirai | Kynshah |
| 48. | Syndon | Shirieh | Jum | Khongriah |

*Note* 1) 3, 13, and 30 are households the heads of which are men who have no wife or sister (mother, niece) living with them.
2) Husbands of 10, 44 and 45 died, and 25 divorced.
3) Husbands of 26 and 32 are the same man (polygynyst).

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List 7. *Numbers by kur of Individuals named in List 6.*

| | *House-owner* | | *Spouses* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Women* | *Men* | | |
| | — | — | — | — |
| 1. Prarian | 5 | 1 | 5 | 11 |
| 2. Riahtam | 3 | | 3 | 6 |
| 3. Dkhar | 5 | | 6 | 11 |
| 4. Shrieh | 5 | | 1 | 6 |
| 5. Puhcong | 2 | | 0 | 2 |
| 6. Kaing | 1 | | 3 | 4 |
| 7. Khongsit | 5 | | 3 | 8 |
| 8. Khongsidir | 3 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| 9. Khongshei | 3 | | 3 | 6 |
| 10. Khongmawpat | 2 | | 2 | 4 |
| 11. Khonglam | 5 | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| 12. Khongjliew | 2 | | 1 | 3 |
| 13. Khongngain | 1 | | 1 | 2 |
| 14. Khongriah | 1 | | 3 | 4 |
| 15. Tham | 2 | | 0 | 2 |
| 16. Kynshah | 2 | | 1 | 3 |
| 17. Khongjah | | | 1 | 1 |
| 18. Mosar | | | 1 | 1 |
| 19. Tyngong | | | 1 | 1 |
| 20. Majaw | | | 1 | 1 |
| 21. Khongji | | | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 45 | 3 | 40 | 88 |

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List 8. *Actual descent Links found among House-owners of Sohkynduh.*

| *House-owners** | *Kur* |
|---|---|
| 1. 18-21-23 | Prarian |
| 2. 4-45 | Prarian |
| 3. 28-29-35 | Riahtam |
| 4. 27-40 | Dkhar |
| 5. 20-48-44-38 | Shrieh |
| 6. 33-39-43 | Khongsit |
| 7. 36-37 | Khongsit |
| 8. 11-12 | Khongsidir |
| 9. 7-22 | Khongshei |
| 10. 16-15 | Khongmowpat |
| 11. 25-34 | Khongjiliew |
| 12. 32-46 | Kynshah |

*Note:* Figures correspond to that of List 6.

List 9. *House-owners and their Spouses of Kongion.*

| *House-owner* | *Kur* | *Spouse* | *Kur* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Shra | Pohnong | Ijiro | Khongsit |
| 2. Klur | — | •(Mahalik) | Shabong |
| 3. Pheni | — | •(Skit) | Majaw |
| 4. Rai | — | D(Skit) (3) | — |
| 5. Syen | — | Shynna | Khongsit |
| 6. Khubor | — | •(Irai) | — |
| 7. Shngiam | — | D(Esrun) | Sohkhlet |
| 8. Lphuin | — | Juboorai (32, 20) | Majaw |
| 9. Den | — | Khain | Riahtam |
| 10. Kyria | — | •(Ridon) | Sohkhlet |
| 11. U Kyarsi | — | D(Jat) | Khongsit |
| 12. Sad | — | Khim | Khongwir |
| 13. Tanghui | Khongsit | •(Kheng) | Myrieng |
| 14. Rihiam | — | •(Mongbah) | Majaw |
| 15. Liti | — | Borsing | Shabong |
| 16. Web | — | Mrit | Buhphang |
| 17. Latem | — | •(Ring) | Shabong |
| 18. Langdiang | — | Burma | Riahtam |
| 19. Ribamon | — | Swar | Pohnong |
| 20. Mo | — | Juboorai (8, 32) | Majaw |
| 21. Kliet | — | Nobar | — |
| 22. Thaksit | — | D*(Bit) | — |
| 23. U Sabur | — | •(Jling) | Shabong |
| 24. Iut | — | •(Khyllah) | Khongji |
| 25. Dugar | — | •(Lariang) | Khongngain |
| 26. Duro | Majaw | Iong | Khongshei |
| 27. Buh | — | That | Sohkhlet |
| 28. Hima | — | Shedar | Rangrah |

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| | *House-owner* | *Kur* | *Spouse* | *Kur* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | — | — | — | — |
| 29. | U Shai | — | Phri | Khongngain |
| 30. | Tamsa | — | *(Ramjai) | Pohnong |
| 31. | Kiun | — | Joit | Khongwir |
| 32. | Krip | — | Mok | Buhphang |
| 33. | Main | — | Soh | Dkhar |
| 34. | Pein | Rangrah | Kber | Shabong |
| 35. | Ieh | — | Kdu | — |
| 36. | Kynian | — | Hara | Shabong |
| 37. | Tied | — | | |
| 38. | U Thuia | — | Phiri | Lyngdoh |
| 39. | Pata | Riahtam | D*(Biria) | Tding |
| 40. | Kit | — | Shkor | Pohnong |
| 41. | Rimai | — | D*(Piew) | — |
| 42. | Rita | — | *(Bhashon) | Kynshah |
| 43. | Ribih | — | Shamaliak | Lyngdoh |
| 44. | Git | — | Kynhei | Tding |
| 45. | Jemjani | Sohkhlet | Skin | Khongji |
| 46. | Wuni | — | *(Mishon) | Shabong |
| 47. | Kror | — | Sho | Khongsit |
| 48. | Hori | Shabong | *(Brim) | Rangrah |
| 49. | Pho | — | Mlian | Khongji |
| 50. | Sho | — | Slam | Khongngain |
| 51. | Luguin | — | D*(Niew) | Lyngdoh |
| 52. | Rupa | — | Jubongrai (8, 20) | Majaw |
| 53. | Ksher | — | *(Rangsi) | Khongsit |
| 54. | Kolina | — | Poi | Majaw |
| 55. | Lak | Khongji | D*(Khyllah) | Khongshei |
| 56. | U Phin | — | *(Syaid) | Mynrieng |
| 57. | Thasi | — | Ten | Shabong |
| 58. | Dheaw | — | Dormu | Rangrah |
| 59. | Syaid | Mynrieng | D(Phin, 56) | Khongji |
| 60. | Syur | — | Kdek | Khongrymmai |
| 61. | Sur | — | *(Base) | Shabong |
| 62. | Bhik | — | D(Lar) | Majaw |

*Note:* 1) * = dead. D = divorced.
2) House-owners of 11, 23, 29, 38 and 56 are men, and the rest are women.
3) Husband of 8, 20 and 52 are the same man (polygynist).

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List 10. *Numbers by kur of Individuals named in List 9.*

| *Kur* | *No. of house-owners* | | *No. of spouses* | | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Women* | *Men* | *Men* | *Women* | |
| | — | — | — | — | — |
| 1. Pohnong | 11 | 1 | 4 | | 16 |
| 2. Khongsit | 12 | 1 | 6 | | 19 |
| 3. Majaw | 7 | 1 | 7 | | 15 |
| 4. Rangrah | 4 | 1 | 3 | | 8 |
| 5. Riahtam | 6 | | 2 | | 8 |

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| *Kur* | *No. of house-owners* | | *No. of spouses* | | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Women* | *Men* | *Men* | *Women* | |
| — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 6. Sohkhlet | 3 | | 3 | | 6 |
| 7. Shabong | 7 | | 10 | | 17 |
| 8. Khongji | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 |
| 9. Mynrieng | 4 | | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| 10. Khongwir | | | 2 | | 2 |
| 11. Buhphong | | | 2 | | 2 |
| 12. Khongngain | | | 3 | | 3 |
| 13. Khongshei | | | 2 | | 2 |
| 14. Dkhar | | | 1 | | 1 |
| 15. Lyngdoh | | | 2 | | 3 |
| 16. Tding | | | 2 | | 2 |
| 17. Kynshah | | | 1 | | 1 |
| 18. Khongrymmai | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Total | 37 | 5 | 54 | 3 | 119 |

List 11. *Actual Descent Links found among House-owners of Kongong.*

| *House-owners* | *Kur* |
|---|---|
| 1. 1-7 | Pohnong |
| 2. 2-3-12 | Pohnong |
| 3. 13-18 | Khongsit |
| 4. 14-15 | Khongsit |
| 5. 17-25 | Khongsit |
| 6. 19-20 | Khongsit |
| 7. 23-24 | Khongsit |
| 8. 26-29[illegible] | Majaw |
| 9. 27-28 | Majaw |
| 10. 31-32 | Majaw |
| 11. 36-38 | Rangrah |
| 12. 40-44 | Riahtam |
| 13. 42-43 | Riahtam |
| 14. 43-46[illegible] | Sohkhlet |
| 15. 48-49[illegible] | Shabong |
| 16. 59-60[illegible] | Mynrieng |

*Note:* Numbers correspond to that of List 9.

The data I ollected in Sohkynduh and Kongton show that the number of housholds that can be included in a single descent group (actual kinship ies through female members) is strikingly small, as shown in List 8(Sohkynduh) and List 11 (Kongton). The maximum number of housholds belonging to a recognizable descent group was four, and mostly two. Many households (19 households of Sohkynduh; 25 households o Kongton) which did not appear in List 8 and List 11,

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613 614 621 formed independent descent groups by individual households, for which no traceable genealogical relation with any other descent groups could be established, though some of them belonged to the same *kur*. In Sohkynduh, the total 48 households were divided into 16 *kur* (according to the house-owner), and in Kongton, the total 62 households were divided into 9 *kur*, while the number of actual descent groups amount to 31 in Sohkynduh and 41 in Kongton.

166 178 613 614 621 This fact, I presumed, indicated a considerable mobility of the population of each village community. Hence, I tried my best to reconstruct the historical alignments of these descent groups, both from my genealogical data and with the help of the villagers' memory. The result showed that the mobility of the population over the last fifty years had been surprisingly great and complex. In Sohkynduh, the Praian clan seems to be the oldest inhabitants of this village with 16 *kur* segments. Next came a family of the Ksing. The third wave was a family of Khonglam, and the fourth, Siem Lyngngoh which I mentioned previously (p. 104). The next were families of the Kynshah, many members of which had left for Nonprian village after a few years. The sixth wave was the Srieh family. All the above movements took place before the great earthquake of 1897 which shook Assam. After 1897 the movements became more intense and complicated, and involved many families of various *kur*. The villagers could not remember the order in which they came: there has been continual coming and going even up to now. At present, the Prarian, the Ksing, the Khonglam, the Kynshah and the Dkhar are the older among the 16 *kur*. However, such migrations concern usually a single family only, not a group of *kur*, and that is the typical pattern of Khasi migration. Hence, families which have the same *kur* name do not always indicate the same movements. The incentive for such migration seems to be to get land better appropriated to one's economic condition. Particularly, as I have already mentioned elsewhere (p. 105), the shortage of land seems to encourage families of elder sisters who have no share of property, to move to other areas and look for land.

Thus, many households which make up the present village are minor segments of different *kur*, or of the same *kur*, but they can hardly trace their genealogical relations to one another. A migration to a new village was not undertaken at random; it was mostly as a result of information received from neighbouring villages, or from those where friends or relatives had already settled in. Several neighbouring villages usually dispose of more than one common market where they can exchange information and developed friendships over trading. The matrilineal kinship relation is no more important a factor than any of the others mentioned above. Among the Khasi,

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the matrilineal descent group has a distinguished function only when there is common residence and common property.

In Kongton, among 9 different *kur* (List 10), Pohnong and Khonsit accounted for the majority of the population, while the rest, seven *kur*, were more or less of equal size. On the whole the population seemed more stable than that of Sohkynduh. However, as in Sohkynduh, actual descent groups amounted to 41, many of which have the same *kur* name but could not always establish genealogical relationship with one another; nor was there any functional cohesion. I failed to reconstruct the history of the formation of these descent groups: the villagers had no memory of their past except very fragmentary information which was quite insufficient to account for their present composition. They only insisted this was a very old village in comparison with Sohkynduh and other neighbouring villages.

While I was struggling with the villagers' scant accounts of their past and fragmented kinship relations among the present households, I was struck by the poorness of the villagers' genealogical memory in comparison with that of the Garo. Suppose A, B and C, who belonged to the same property-holding descent group three generations back: A and B being sisters and C being B's daughter. If B, including her descendants, moved away from the village two generations back, the present generation of A's and C's descendants would easily lose contact and knowledge of their genealogical relationship. This fact, on the other hand, illustrates some important aspects of the Khasi social structure: the kinship relation—matrilineal descent link—is not a significant factor beyond the scale of the household (property-holding descent group), and locality is more important than matrilineal descent for the formation of the Khasi community. Through the predominant practice of endogamy on the level of the village, the small segments (found on a level of a household or a group of a few households) of various different *kur* clustered in a village are linked by affinal relations each other, by which altogether form a well knit social organization of a village community. The cohesion and solidarity of the Khasi village community is strengthened by the local endogamy not by the localized lineage organization.

In fact, in contrast with the rather loose kinship relations which link different households, the affinal relations link almost every households in the village, as shown in Fig. 10. The lines, ———, indicate marriage relations between living members of households, and the lines, - - - - -, indicate affinal relations established through dead members of present households or through spouses' kinship relations at Sohkynduh, as in November 1955. In this way, except for one household (24), members of a single household are all linked together through affinal or cognatic ties. In some cases, the affinal relations between

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7



of marriages between these two *kur*. Such marriage arrangements cannot be regarded as constituting a cross-cousin institution. From my data of four villages it was not possible to produce any institutionalized pattern.

In general, the selection of a marital partner depends mainly on personal choice, though the authority of the *iing* (descent group) and parents should be consulted. The man proposes to the girl. The network of marriage relations among the Khasi seems in no way to follow any set principle. Every marriage is likely to be fortuitous: it is ruled simply by temporary personal liking, except for the strict rule of exogamy and the avoidance of near kin.

Exogamy is strictly kept. In the olden days breaking this rule was equivalent to being sentenced to death. Offenders had their heads shaved in a particular way and had to leave the Khasi community completely. Even now such a marriage is considered as the worst kind of sin; a Khasi Christian intellectual said to me that it was worse than homicide. I came across one couple who had broken this rule. Though they had different *kur* names, both *kur* were segments of one common *kur*. It happened in Jatinga, one of the most modern Khasi communities whose inhabitants were all Christians. The couple were not allowed to have their house inside the village. Their house was in the jungle about one mile away from the village.

Successive sororate marriage—marriage to a younger sister of the late wife—is practised, since it justifies the widower in remaining in the same household as his children after his wife's death. Otherwise, the Khasi rule demands that he should leave the house and his children in order to remarry another woman. We shall deal with this aspect again in terms of marriage.

## II. Principle of Descent and Succession

Previously I have mentioned the *kpoh*, the matrilineal kin group with a common great grandmother. This is not, however, an institutional corporate descent group. The most important functional descent unit is called *iing*. The *iing* is the lowest order of clan segmentation, smaller than the *kpoh*—a *kpoh* may include two or more *iing*. The generation depth of an *iing* is usually two to four, in some cases an *iing* is formed only by mother and child. The Khasi consider this unit to be the most important social index for the classification of individuals. Marriages are arranged by individual *iing*, not by wider groups of kinsmen. The *iing* is the structurally significant norm. The term *iing* is also used for a house building itself, as is the *nok* of the Garo. However, the membership of the *iing*, as I shall

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• 613 explain later, does not always correspond to a domestic unit, nor to a corporate production unit. At least husbands are excluded from the wives' *iing* though they share a common household. The members of an *iing* consist of a set of strictly matrilineal descendants, who have a common right over the ancestral property, are subject to a common authority and practise some joint ritual.

The membership of the *iing* is determined through the mother. The central core of the *iing* comprises two persons, one holding the authority and the other owning the property; the rule of succession is strictly matrilineal. The authority goes from mother's brother to sister's son while the property is handed down from mother to daughter.

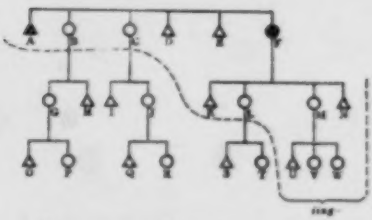

FIG. 11. — *Composition of the Members of an* Iing.

A man continues to be a member of the same *iing* all his life whether he marries or not. A woman, if she is not the heiress (the youngest daughter), will branch off after her marriage and though she herself will continue as member of her mother's *iing*, the third generation from her will form an independent *iing*. It is sometimes difficult to trace the clear line of each group, as it is formed by a process of branching off. The actual working of the *iing* may be explained as follows (see Fig. 11).

All members appearing in Fig. 11 form a *kpoh*. The dotted lines mark off members of one *iing*. F is the mother who possesses property and A is her brother who holds the authority in the *iing*. F's property is at the disposal of all members of the *iing* for funerals, and for religious ceremonies of the *iing*. But all members of the *iing* do not usually share the property, as I shall explain later in connection with the dwelling unit.

G, H, I, J, S and T are excluded from F's *iing*, but F is responsible for them if their mothers should die before their marriage. In case they loose their mother they must be fed by F, or by F's daughter, or by F's grand-daughter. The descendants of B, C and L will form respective independent *iing*, separated from F's. Thus, the position of B, C and L show the process by which an *iing* segments. F is succeeded at her death by her youngest daughter M.

On the death of A, he is succeeded in his position of authority by K. If K is too young, and D or E live in the same house as K, D or E will succeed A. Succession to the position of authority normally depends on seniority, but capability and the place of residence are also taken into account, according to circumstances. In the

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absence of A, D, E, K and N, U succeeds to the office if he is grown up. If U is too young, a chance arises for F's husband, if F is alive, if not, for M's husband.[1] In the event that none of these males be available, finally the office is taken by F and then by M. It should be noted that the office assumed by F's husband, M's husband, F or M would have to be returned to M's son, as soon as he comes of age. These cases are considered a temporary measure to meet an emergency.

The Khasi follow a strict descent line, and neither a classificatory uncle (or brother) is allowed to take over the authority of the *iing*,[2] though if there is no successor to the property, a daughter may be adopted from the nearest matrilineal descent group. Instead of the adoption of a daughter, the following steps may also be taken. The property is handed over to the nearest matrilineal descent group; or if there is a son, he may inherit his father's or mother's acquired property, but ancestral property should go to a matrilineal kin. In such cases, the particular *iing* actually becomes extinct: in the former case, though the property is handed over to another *iing*, this *iing* belongs to the same matrilineal line; in the latter, the property goes eventually to the son's wife and to his children, i.e. an *iing* of an entirely different *kur*. The latter arrangement suggests that though the Khasi follow the strict descent line, so far as the acquired property is concerned, the child has primary rights over the mother's other matrilineal kin, as expressed by the son's right of inheritance in the absence of a daughter. In this way, the *iing* may become extinct by the death of the female member who has no daughter.

The Khasi consider the *iing* institution as the basic and most important functional unit; it represents also the religious unit which keeps ancestral property and shares a common religious ceremony. This is indeed the key to the whole Khasi social organization.

## III. Residential Unit

In this section I shall deal with the relation between the *iing* and the domestic dwelling unit and examine the type of relation maintained between the marital family (husband, wife and children) and the *iing*. Among the Garo, the *nok* corresponds to the actual group of individuals residing within one household. Upon this point the Khasi system is more complicated since spouses of members of the *iing* are excluded from the *iing*.

1. This would only arise in cases where the husbands of F or M live in the same household as their wives.
2. In the case of succession to the chieftainship, a classificatory sister's son is taken in the absence of a direct nephew or brother

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592 The Khasi domestic unit (co-residential group) can be divided into four categories:

1. Households consisting of wife, husband and their children, wife's unmarried sisters and brothers—sometimes including widowed or divorced.
2. Households including all members of an *iing* (excluding their spouses from members of 1). In this type, larger households contain all the descendants of three or more generations from one woman (in this case, an *iing* corresponds to a *kpoh*).
3. Households of intermediate type between 1 and 2. Husbands are supposed to live in their wife's house, but they often go back to their sister's house for meals, and sometimes sleep there. They are supposed to work in their wife's field but they might work in their mother's (sister's) field, if necessary. This tendency is especially strong among newly married couples before they have a child.
4. Households consisting of only one elementary family. This mostly happens when a man married a non-heiress.

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Most Khasi households are of types 1, 3 and 4 and these three types are usually found within one village. They were found in the four villages in which I worked. It is to these dwelling units that I have given the name of house in Lists 6 and 9. Category 2, according to the information of Khasis and Jaintias, was used to be found among the Jaintias, though nowadays such cases are rapidly decreasing, changing into forms 1, 3 and 4. The members of category 2 belong to an *iing*, which structurally corresponds to the *tarwad* of the Nayar, and the *parui* of the Minangkabau.

[178]

178 184 591 Category 2 may have been practised among certain of the Khasi a long time ago. Kongton people said that as recently as their father's generation, there were many husbands who stayed at the mother's house after their marriage and visited the wife at night. Nowadays, visiting husbands are very unusual cases in the Khasi Hills, though such situations may occur among newly married couples before they have children. Gurdon, who wrote his book *The Khasi* in 1914, states:

> "Amongst the Khasis, after one or two children are born, and if a married couple get on well together, the husband frequently removes his wife and family to a house she and her husband post their savings, which are expended for the support of the family" (p. 78).

In the Khasi Hills, the transition period between duolocal residence and neolocal or uxorilocal residence seems to have been shortened during the last forty or fifty years. This might have been effected through the influence of Christian marriages, which start cohabitation of the wife and the husband immediately after the marriage ceremony. However, in Jaintiga whose inhabitants originated in the Jaintia Hills where duolocal marriage is the usual practice, there are even now many instances of a man staying at his mother's house for several

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years after his marriage. During this period he works in his wife's field, then, if the couple gets on well, they start to live together in an independent house (non-heiress's case) or in the wife's house (heiress's case). In spite of the fact that the inhabitants are all Christians, they have retained this custom.

It is difficult to determine at what date the Khasi people have changed from duolocal marriage to uxorilocal marriage. However, the present dwelling unit, with its fluid relationship between husband and wife (in fact, there are many cases of category 3), suggests a situation linked with the duolocal residence pattern. The fragmentary historical information available and the present Khasi residence pattern suggest that the duolocal arrangement may be an older pattern of marriage. When I was in Kongton there was no husband who stayed at his mother's house permanently, visiting his wife at night. The head man told me that, when he married, there were many who did not stay in the wife's house. He was the first person to settle in the wife's house. In his case, he said, he felt sympathy for his wife who had no brother who could work for her. After he had settled in his wife's house, many villagers began to follow his example.[1] When the pattern of a visiting marriage was in vogue, a village must have constituted a more compact endogamous unit. If the husband's house was in another village, a visiting marriage must have been a great inconvenience. The tendency to settle in the wife's house and work for the wife's house must have brought about a wider range of marriage contracts, such as with members of nearby villages, even though in the present form of marriage, village endogamy is much preferred as it is decidedly advantageous particularly for a husband, since he can continue his life in the same familiar environment in spite of uxorilocal marriage.

The variations in the pattern of co-residential grouping, which I have classified into four categories, reflect two different themes in the social structure of the Khasi. On the one hand they represent different stages in the maturity of the individual families concerned. For example, a householder who starts in category 3 or 4 may end as an old man in category 1. On the other hand these variations also reflect the polar opposition between the obligations of matrilineal kinship and the obligations of parenthood; a man, in particular, has conflicting obligations towards the ring of his sister and the ring of

1. However, all the information which I collected in the upland Khasi Hills indicates that the uxorilocal residence pattern has been practised for a long time. According to stories often told by the Kongton people, they migrated from the Jaintia Hills. If these accounts are to be taken as a reflection of the real history of their migration, it would seem that the Kongton people may have kept up the Jaintia custom including the duolocal residence pattern up to recent times, while the majority of the Khasi practised uxorilocal marriage.

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592 his wife. Paternal rights are not well recognized among the Khasi.
593 The religious elements in the *siang* institution lay stress only on matri-
• 619 lineal solidarity. These elements tend therefore to orient each individual of the domestic unit to his or her own matrilineal kin group, the *siang*. This results in unstable relations between members of each elementary family, in other words, the marriage relation is one of the weakest.

000 This is the crucial point in matrilineal societies, and has been much discussed by anthropologists. Richards says,

> 'In this balance of privileges and duties between the patrikin and the matrikin the crucial point is obviously the husband's right to determine the residence of the bride. If she and her children live in the same homestead or village as his kinsmen, his domestic authority is likely to be greater than where they remain with the wife's relatives' (Richards, 1950, p. xvii).

This statement is quite acceptable for those matrilineal systems which provide possibility for a man to take his wife from her matrikin to his house or village where the husband's kin are found, as in cases of the matrilineal Central Bantus, the Ashanti, the Trobriands and
591 the Nayar in North Malabar. However, among the Khasi, there is no such custom of removing a wife from her kin to that of her husband. Since most marriages take place inside a village, there are only two different residential arrangements: one is to take the husband to the wife's house, where he lives with his wife's parents and other matrikin; the second is for the newly married couple to establish an independent house. Among Khasi men and women the usual practice is to leave the parents' house at marriage, except in the case of the heiress (the youngest daughter). In this respect the Khasi differ again from the Nayar and the Minangkabau who form a sibling family on the basis of duolocal residence,[1] and from the Hopi, the Zuni and the Trobriand who form a residential group of an extended family, based on matrilineal descent including in-marrying husbands of married females. Khasi sisters do not form a residential group after their marriage; sisters' houses are scattered over the whole village residential area, mixing with households of other descent groups (see Fig. 10 with List 8).

Then, what is the factor that makes the Khasi have two different types of residence i.e. uxorilocal and neolocal[2] within a matrilineal

1. Only the case of some traditional Jaintias (category a) would appear to show groupings similar to those of the Nayar, however, I did not work among them, nor are there anthropological reports available for them, particularly in this respect.

2. I use 'neolocal' in terms of house-building, since they usually build a house for newly married couple in the same village where both wife's and husband's parents live—village endogamy.

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society? Among the matrilineal Central Bantus, Richards says that the determining factor in residence at marriage is the marriage payment or the type of goods and services which the bridegroom gives (Richards, 1950, p. 191). However, the Khasi have no such custom in the marriage contract, it is therefore out of the question to explain the two types of residence in this way. In the case of the Khasi, the determining factor is the type of marriage with relation to the rule of inheritance and ownership of property, which is closely related to the structure of the *siang*. Khasi marriages can be divided into two categories i.e., marriage with an heiress and with a non-heiress. Marriages with an heiress must be matrilocal. This accounts for category 1 or 3 of the household pattern. On the other hand, marriages with a non-heiress become neolocal and correspond to category 4 of the household unit.

## IV. Marriage with an Heiress

A man married to an heiress, usually lives with his wife's parents and her unmarried or divorced brothers and sisters. For a man, life after marriage under such circumstances require great adjustment and endurance. The husband's status is especially weak when a male member of the wife's kin lives in the same household. The management of property and all economic activities are entirely controlled by the authority (wife's brother or maternal uncle) of the *siang*. The husband works in the wife's field under constant supervision from this authority. Both economic activities and domestic affairs are always under the management of this authority. The children have more attachment to, and are more obedient to, the maternal uncle than to the father. The tie between the uncle and the nephew is so strong that the father is rather like an additional member of the household. He is the last person to be introduced to visitors.

This family system is clearly reflected in the daily behaviour. When we visited the Khasi household of a youngest daughter, if a man (obviously the husband) came first to greet us, he always said "please wait, my wife (or mother-in-law) is coming." And it was the wife who entertained us, offering tea or pan and discussing matters with us, while her husband remained silent in the corner of the room, or in the next room. If her uncle or brother was there, he would be the person who talked to us, while his sister or sister served us. In such a case, we were seldom introduced to the husband. When I was working at Shella, I happened to stay in such a family. I had hardly any opportunity to talk to the husband during the two weeks of my stay. He left the house very early in the morning and came back late in the evening from the fields. While he was at home, he was

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ship. They still live in the same familiar atmosphere as before their marriage. The implications of this ambiguity in the married state are considerable. Particularly the husband's uncomfortable situation, when the wife is heiress, encourages him to take marriage less seriously.

A husband who undergoes hardship in his wife's house, finds himself as the authority in his sister's house; if he is not the authority, he can find at least a respected position as uncle or brother. In the case of a man of authority in the *iing*, the tendency for him to regard his *iing* as more important than his married life is proportionately stronger, as I will discuss later. Hence the most unstable and unsuccessful marriages are those between the heiress and the man of authority. This is one of the reasons we often find among the Khasi: a brother or an uncle, who is already married, acting nevertheless as the head to a family *(iing)* and as a member of its domestic group. This means that he is in a state of temporary separation or divorced. Among the Ashanti, a man and his wife's brother are never found as members of a common household (Fortes, 1950, p. 262), but among the Khasi, on the contrary, a man and his wife's brother are often found as members of a common household. In such cases, however, the brother has no wife, or never brings his wife to his *iing*. Therefore, a man and his wife and his sister never reside together. As far as the residence of women is concerned, the Khasi keep to the strict descent rule; two women who belong to different descent groups never live together. This point differentiates the Khasi residence pattern, in which social structure is involved, from that not only of the Ashanti but also of the Yao where the head of a descent group can bring his wife to his sister's household, though, among other members, uxorilocal marriage is the rule. These differential aspects of matrilineal systems will be discussed from a more theoretical point of view later.

In addition, should a Khasi man even succeed in spending his life with his wife's kinsmen, as soon as the wife dies, he will usually return to his *iing*, that is, to his sister's house, where he is received warmly and where he often acts as the *de facto* authority, as in the similar situation of divorce and separation. Thus the strong matrilineal structural principle tends to orient a man towards his own descent group, the *iing*.

The man's attachment to his *iing* is very great throughout his life. In this regard the Khasi differs from the matrilineal Negri Sembilan Malay. Among the latter, returning to the matrilineal kin is regarded by the man as an imposition rather than as the enjoyment of a legitimate privilege (see Swift, 1958, p. 157).[1] This difference

1. He presents this fact as one of the reasons of the durability of marriage among the Negri Sembilan. Indeed, on this precise point they differ from the Khasi where marriage is rather unstable.

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seems to come *firstly* from the different residential arrangement on marriage: among the Nagri Sombidan a man marries into his wife's group, i.e. his wife's village, being thus separated from his kin, and as a result of the physical absence of his wife's brother or maternal uncle in his domestic family, he enjoys considerable rights in his wife's household—as Swift states, he is 'master in his own house.' On the other hand, since among the Khasi the man stays in the village where his mother's (or mother's successor's) house is, even after his marriage, his relation to his natal house is preserved, *ipso facto*, from the structural difference of organization of the descent group. Among the Khasi, the *iing* is always the centre of the descent group, based on uniprimitive succession and inheritance. Hence, the core of the descent group is always found physically in a particular household, whereas among the Nagri Sombidan, the descent group is not organized on a *household* level, but is a much wider organization, including apparently many households. Membership of an actual household and of a descent group are at different levels. To marry out and become a member of his wife's household means for the man the transfer of his household membership. Likewise, his sister's husband becomes a member of his sister's household. Thereby he becomes a secondary member of his sister's household after marriage though he keeps his membership in the descent group to which his sister belongs. Among the Khasi, membership of a descent group always corresponds to membership of a particular household. The Khasi man can always demand his rights at his natal house primarily, as he is a member of that descent group. But it should be noted that he has this right only in his mother's (or mother's successor's) household, not in other sisters' (non-heiress') and mother's sisters' households (unless one of them is successor of his mother), though they may belong to the same descent group. These matri kin's households are considered as separate *iing* (strict functional descent groups) from his.

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Indeed, sometimes a man cannot find his *iing*, because his mother died leaving no daughter to succeed her, or his sister died leaving no successor, and his *iing* became extinct. Such a case occasionally happens when a man [illegible] old. Then he has to face a serious social and economic condition. In divorcing, he has to leave everything he owned, his earnings including the house which he built, and even children . . . really he has nothing left him except his body.[1] Such a wretched man collects some timber and makes a small hut for himself, though sometimes lads who sympathize with him help him to build it. Unless he finds some woman

1. A widower has an alternative solution—to remain in his late wife's household till he marries again, though his position is not comfortable there.

whom he can marry, he has to endure the miserable family life, while often in the same village his former wife is living in a well-built house with her children and her matrilineal relatives as before. Households of 3, 13 and 31 of Mawphniah in List 6, and 23, 25, 38 and 56 of Kongtan in List 9 are instances of such cases. It is really a pitiful picture to see such a man, aged and poor, living all alone.

## 5. Marriage with the Non-khasis

Outsiders who come to the Khasi Hills are often impressed by the Khasi husband's miserable status and express surprise at the high divorce rate. This is mostly due to exaggeration based on the marriage with the Nepalese. However, where a man marries a non-Nepalese, there are many successful marriages with paternal authority. In most of these cases a man's status as a husband and as a father is stable. First of all, the domestic residential unit is an elementary family. From the onset of the marriage the husband's labour is of great importance to his family, since a non-khasi usually has no economic background, i.e., no dowry or inherited property (see p. 113). The economic circumstances allow a man to be the *de facto* head even though whatever he earns belongs, as a rule, to his wife. A man who succeeds at the beginning of his married life is respected and honoured as father in his family for the rest of his life. By this type of marriage, the man's status is firmly established. It is therefore a more secure form of marriage than a match with an khasi.

In such a marriage the children love and obey their father. The management of his acquired property will be taken over by his son and the property will be handed over to his daughter. Thus his paternal authority is as well established in this form of domestic family as in a patrilineal family. However, the great difference from a patrilineal case is that the husband/father status is not permanent as the authority of the family. Theoretically he exercises it in the absence of a male adult member of his wife's clan (normally founded by his maternal uncle, as in the case of [illegible]). In the next generation this will form an established clan in which the husband of his youngest daughter will suffer again.

The household of this kind of marriage with a non-khasi actually enjoys a considerable degree of independence from the descent groups of both wife and husband. If a man who has established a matrimonial life independent of his wife's natal clan, is not the authority of his natal clan, its relation with the latter usually becomes weaker. Economic and residential factors make it possible for the man to make the considerable shift from his clan to his wife's clan, and though

to closely maintain the label of his descent group, he is at best divorced from them economically. If a father's activities were such as to permit the accumulation of wealth to be handed over to the next generation, he is always remembered with great regard and admiration by his successors and by the descendants of his wife's matrilineal line. In such a case he is looked upon as a member of his wife's descent group rather than of his mother's descent group. The best examples of this are the case of men belonging to the first generation of Jutuga villagers, especially that of the founder of Jutuga. These immigrants to Jutuga mostly accompanied their wives, who were not heiresses (as I mentioned previously, the out of Kiwai immigrants is mostly found in this kind of a couple), and most of them established successful matrimonial life with parental authority, having been freed from the gravity of both matrilocality of wife as well as of husband.

Not necessarily confined to such cases of immigrants, even in an ordinary situation, if husband is ready to devote himself to his wife and children, the matrimonial life mostly turns happier and well established one. For under the Kiwai matrilineal system, a wife, if she is not the heiress, is normally oriented to develop surprisingly high degree of independence from her descent group, i.e. her natal ring, unlike women of other matrilineal societies. This fact is closely related with the unique structure of the ring, as already discussed.

As a woman (non-heiress) tends to keep a certain distance to her natal ring, her brother accordingly decreases his concern to her new household. The presence of the authority (wife's maternal uncle or brother) of wife's natal ring, on such a household becomes less marked. The wife's brothers are members of her natal ring, not of her new established ring, and therefore none of them can act as an authority over her new ring, though they may exercise certain pressure on the sister's husband, since the sister who established the new ring still keeps her membership in her natal ring. In fact a husband actually feels pressure from his wife's brothers, the occasional visits of the authority of her natal ring exercise a psychological check on his whole conduct, [illegible] occur in the marriage, the wife will run to her brother for consolation. Furthermore, as member of her natal ring, he has the right to demand the property acquired by him if his wife has no successor, since it automatically belongs to his wife unless to acquired it without cohabitation with her, or through the capital of his ring. However, the process of segmentation in the ring leads the wife to greater attachment to her husband, particularly when his economic contribution is important, and as a consequence weakens her ties with her natal ring.

The limited rights of the brother over his sister's (non-heiress)

household are easily understandable in the light of the economic aspect of the fusion of the ring. As I stated before, the non-heiress is given hardly any share of the property of her natal ring on her marriage (if the ring is rich a non-heiress and the sons may receive some part), and even if her new household happens to face serious economic difficulty, her natal ring, whose authority is vested in her brother, does not usually help her. This fact clearly suggests that brothers can have only limited rights over the sister-sister's ring.

This is the crucial point of the Khasi matrilineal system. The ring is a very restricted descent group, giving opportunities to split off by those who have no right to inheritance. The ring has vertical continuity without expansion in collateral lines. Therefore, even the siblings of the same mother do not always form a completely constant unit of a functional descent group, since the sister-sisters are oriented by their marriages to form a new ring, though they may retain their membership in their natal ring. The central core of the ring is the particular sibling bond between a sister (the heiress) and a brother (the authority), a pair of statuses. Other sisters are ready to have and other brothers are fluid members, clearly differentiated in status from that particular brother (authority) and sister (heiress). This structural principle should be compared with other matrilineal descent groups, whose sibling group is based on interdependence between members of a group, not between particular persons or statuses. The structural unit of the Khasi social organization, is not the descent group based on sibling links, but the ring, though descent is the principal factor, and the limiting one, in the formation of the ring membership. The descent factor is delineated by the functional force of the inheritance rule through female ultimogeniture, which results in recurrent internal fusion and segmentation in the descent group. Politically, it is very similar to the process of fusion of the Ga'o and on the segmentary principle, though the internal structure is different.

The establishment of a new household by a Khasi woman with her husband, means the beginning of the establishment of a new ring, separated from her natal ring not only in residence but also socially as ring, matrilineal descent group. Therefore, a woman who has once established a new household independent of her natal household, will not go back to her natal home i.e. her mother's descent group, though her bond with her mother's descent group remains undiminished. Of course she may visit her natal ring occasionally, but in fact, much less than (as husband will visit his natal ring. In this respect as well the Khasi manifest structural differences from the Ashanti as described by Fortes, where a mother goes back to her own matrilineal household and often prefers to reside there (Fortes, 1949, p. 77). Even

13: Nakase K-9 (1955-1956) 196? AR? Khasi AR?



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after divorce or husband's death, the Khasi woman stays on in her household. Indeed many divorced or widowed poor wives, whose children are still small, try their best to live and bring up their children by themselves without asking their brothers' help. Of course a mother and her small children may go back to live in her natal *ing*. Such cases are found particularly when the woman's *ing* is rich. However, during my field work, I found no sense of psychological inferiority in Khasi women, widows or divorcées, such as we usually find in other societies. The personality of the individual seems to reflect the social structure.

Given such strong residential independence on the part of the non-heiress, economically divorced from her descent group, and oriented towards sociological separation from it, the husband's economic and social contribution is handsomely rewarded by the establishment of a stable, happier, matrimonial life. In fact, as already mentioned, the divorce rate among such couples is very low contrasted with the high rate among marriages with heiresses. More accurately, I should say that divorce is more likely to occur among the latter owing to the conflict of loyalties towards spouse and *ing*. Therefore, when such partner has less loyalty towards his or her natal *ing*, the divorce rate becomes correspondingly lower. Thus, among the Khasi, successful marriages are frequently found where there is branching off from an *ing*. And a new *ing* is always established by a husband's contribution.

Khasi men, who are well aware of this fact, prefer to marry a non-heiress, since they will then form an independent household and remain immune to pressure from their wife's kin. However, they say a poor or lazy man prefers marriage with an heiress. As Richards said of the matrilineal Central Bantus, the residence on marriage seems to be a most important index of the husband's status, though the determining factors of the residence of the Khasi differ from those of the Bantus (see p. 124).

In the case of marriage with an heiress, when the wife dies, the husband usually returns to his *ing* (the youngest sister's house). But in marriage with a non-heiress the husband often remains with his

marry any woman other than his late wife's younger sister. If he marries his wife's younger sister, he has the right to stay on. This kind of several marriage cannot take place in the case of a man married to an heiress, since a Khasi man is not allowed to marry the late wife's elder sister. This form of sororate is found among the Khasi, but the levirate is unknown, such as can be seen among the Ashanti and the Ila, where a man takes his late brother's wife. Among the Khasi, even if a widow happened to marry her late husband's

19: Nakane K-6 (1955-1956) 1967 AR? Khasi AR?



brother (actually not likely to happen), the levirate has no sociological explanation in the social structure, which is specifically related to the residence rule. The levirate seems to have a significant function only when a marriage is virilocal—when the husband has full rights over his residence and property. This is also another aspect where the Khasi structure shows a marked difference from that of the Ashanti and the Ila, etc.

## VI. Marriage as the Key of Authority of an Iing

Among these successful marital families, there are also shadows of a matrilineal order. These affect especially those men who are in the position of authority in an iing. Such a man, though he has an independent household with his wife and children, often visits his youngest sister's (or niece's) house, iing (*ha iing um*), and sometimes stays there. Such a man's attachment to his iing is not only social or psychological, but also often economic. The man, as authority of his natal iing, usually has economic control over the management, particularly so, if his iing has considerable property or active trading business. As husband/father in his family he works for his wife and children, but often takes into consideration as well the interests of his iing. I found such cases especially among richer villagers in Shella and Jaitiaga, where the main economic activities were based on trading.

Among the Khasi, it is quite a traditional rule of the division of labour that women engage in trading activities at markets whether on a large or small scale. Husbands may carry goods from field to market, but male members are kept away from the actual scene of the selling and buying. However, these activities on the part of the women are controlled and accounted for by their uncle or brother, or even son (or, if no male member is available, by the husband), though in many cases they form separate domestic families. The man's control over the trade appears more marked when the scale of business is large.

A man of Jaitiaga, who worked in a shop in Shella, spent his salary in keeping his wife and children, but at the same time he kept the accounts of his sister who was a professional merchant. Thus, the economy of the iing and that of the co-residential group are crossed by the dual role of the man. Hence, among the Khasi, residential autonomy is not always an indication of economic autonomy. However, it should be clearly understood that a man's acquired property goes to his co-residential group, not to his iing.

A man of authority is attached to his iing by the stronger ties of religious, social and economic (management) duties as well as by

19: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR? Khasi AR?



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sentiment, in spite of his forming an independent domestic unit. Such a man with two households, the family of orientation and of procreation, says "one leg is in my sister's house and the other is in my wife's," and he feels more at home in his sister's. In villages, whenever a Khasi man in such a position invited me, I was always taken to his sister's (or sister's) house, his *iing*, not to his wife's. There I was warmly welcomed with highest respect by the women of the household as the guest of their uncle (or of their brother), the head of the *iing*. Khasi men whom outsiders often regard as hapless in their social position, thus enjoy the highest status in their *iing*.

One Khasi gentleman who occupies a fairly high post in the Government, at Haflong, leaving his wife (non-Khasi) and children at Shillong, to my question "when you go to Shillong into which house do you first step," immediately replied, "As soon as I get back to Shillong, I take the way to my sister's home and there take the evening meal with them, enjoying their talk. Then I go to my wife's house where my loving children are waiting." This shows a typical Khasi man's psychology in relation to a family of orientation and of procreation. His first concern on coming back to his homeland is whether his sister and her children are well, since he is the man of authority in that *iing*. He feels much more relaxed in his sister's house where he is held in higher regard and more cared for.

I came across many similar cases. In Jaitinga and Shella, such men on returning from their work, often have their evening meal with their sisters though their wives are waiting for them. Furthermore, if they choose to do so, they sleep at their sister's house without even going back to their wife's house. This results in an unstable married life, where a wife has to face a psychological handicap caused by the occasional absence of the husband, in spite of her advantageous position in a matrilineal and uxorilocal system. Many wives worry every day over whether or not their husbands will come to their house at night. And often this concern changes into sadness and loneliness when the husband does not return for several days on end. The wife knows her husband is at his sister's house in the same village. But she has no right to fetch her husband home. As in Western social dancing, the women have to wait till their partners come. During my field work I often came across these lonely women just waiting for their husbands, each knowing he was only a few houses away. Though these Khasi women never show their feelings of loneliness in the presence of others, I, being a female anthropologist, was often told of the sadness of their married life. The situation of these women can be more easily understood if we remember the process of the segmentation of the *iing*, which separates each married woman from her descent group, her natal *iing*.

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15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7



Thus, the marriage of a non-heiress and a man of authority also produces an unstable position for the husband in spite of his having an independent household. Therefore, the possibility of a really stable marriage is even more limited; it will occur only in the match of a non-heiress and a non-authority of the *iing*. But even these marriages cannot be free from the influence of a matrilineal social structure: the man of authority of the wife's *iing* may visit these couples now and then, curb the husband's power and remind both partners of the orientation towards the matri-kin, the *iing*, though this pressure is insignificant in comparison with that experienced by the heiress's family. Likewise, a husband now and then visits his youngest sister's house, *he iing aw*. These constant matrilineal contacts offer husbands chances of escaping from even the slightest matrimonial tension. Whenever a Khasi man feels uneasiness, he will return to his sister's house rather than face a difficult situation with his wife. This tendency is maximized especially on the occasion of religious ceremonies, when all individuals are grouped around each *iing*.

It is apparent that the rules of the *iing* as the underlying structural pattern, function throughout the various categories of domestic unit of the Khasi community as the most important intrinsic force.

## VII. Polygyny

After this long attempt at the structural analysis of marriages, I think one can theoretically predict what is the situation of polygyny among the Khasi. The theoretical framework elaborated through preceding discussions can also be tested by the empirical data in terms of polygyny.

Nowadays, the Khasi feel so strongly against polygyny that they have no knowledge even that they ever practised it. Many Khasi, in more sophisticated areas, did not believe my findings on polygyny in Nongkynrih and Kongkan. I think this is due to the rapid Christianization of the Hills during the last hundred years. My interpreter, though he was not Christian, said to me in the village, "it is most regrettable to bring you to a village where we find polygyny." However, one of the ministers of the Cherra State to which the two villages belong, told me that there was no particular opposition to polygyny, though recent Christian influence gave people the idea that it was a shameful custom, and he mentioned the case of a polygynist in his area, a man who had recently died, who had had ten wives. In Jaintiya whose inhabitants are all Christian, and in Shella where there has been much contact with, and influence by, Hindus, there were

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7



which I described previously, where a man brings his secondary wives to his first wife's house in which he is acting as the head. Furthermore, sororal polygyny is prohibited, while it was preferred among the Garo in terms of wives taken from the same *mahari*, though mostly not real sisters. The strong jealousy, which I observed, among the Khasi wives of a polygynist, would appear to make such polygynous marriages with closely related women practically impossible. As shown in List 6 & 9 every single one of the wives of each polygynist belongs to different *kur*, and the two secondary wives of the man of Kongton came from neighbouring villages.

These aspects of Khasi polygyny are related fundamentally to the underlying Khasi social structure. It should be remembered that every married woman has her independent household, *ing*, and that two women of different descent groups never reside together (*see p. 127*). The picture is one of every married woman holding a key-point in the whole network of the social system, and men fit into this network with much flexibility. The strong stability of women and the fluid nature of men in terms of residence naturally produces this form of polygyny. This analogy is also true of lovers' relations and illegal marriages. Though polygyny is a rapidly decreasing institution all over the Khasi Hills, cases of lovers' relations and illegal marriages are found to be very numerous among the Khasi, as compared with neighbouring tribes and peoples in Assam.

Throughout my discussions of various forms of Khasi marriage, I found men to be more or less in the position wittily described by one of them as "having one leg in my sister's house, the other in my wife's," except in cases of the husband/father who succeeds in establishing paternal authority, as in marriages with a non-heiress. Even in the latter a man might have a period of uncertainty until his children were born and until the economic basis for his matrimonial life was firmly established. For the rest, Khasi men would be in the position of either becoming the authority of an *ing*, or swinging between their sister and their wife, which may produce more opportunities for lovers' relations. One of a man's legs is certainly always found in his sister's house, the other may rest in his wife's, but it may also rest in another woman's house. The wife being rather accustomed to his occasional absence due to his visits to his sister's house, another kind of absence does not mark any great change from the usual situation, at least not physically. Such situations occur particularly in the earlier stage of the marriage, as a sort of continuation of premarital affairs, which are quite freely practised: it is a usual custom before marriage for young men to sleep at a girl's house whom they like though they say sexual intercourse usually does not take place in such cases. This I observed in Sohkynduh and Kongton.

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these rules, as the Khasi type tends to a uxorilocal arrangement, while the Ashanti type tends to a virilocal or avunculocal arrangement.[1]

In the Khasi type, the residential arrangement is the decisive factor for a man's economic achievement. The men, though they keep close social and ritual ties with their matrilineage, are divorced economically from their matrilineal descent group.[2] On the other hand, in the Ashanti type, where the matrilineal rule is the decisive factor, men keep strong social, ritual and economic ties with their descent group at the expense of the women's and children's residential mobility. However, these women are not like men of the Khasi type; as among the Ashanti, women mostly go back to their matrilineage at a late stage of their married life. In the case of the Trobriands, the wife stays all her married life at her husband's house while her sons go back to her matrilineage, and her daughters leave for their husbands' house at their marriage. This can be considered as the exact opposite of what happens in the Khasi type. The matrilineage represented by men keeps its function and solidarity at the expense of the women. There, the female line (mother-daughter) is broken, in practice, by the residential arrangement, as was broken the male line (mother's brother-sister's son) in the Khasi type. The actual tie of the Trobriand wife to her matrilineage is maintained through the presents her brothers send her, not through mother, sister or daughter. That of the Khasi husband is maintained through his youngest sister or niece, not through his brother or nephew. Thus Trobriand wives and Khasi husbands are marginal members of the matrilineage. These facts show that they sacrifice either the male (*B*) or the female (*A*) line to the co-habitation of wife and husband. Unless they have a structural arrangement like that of the Garo, the co-residence of the married couple is the crucial factor which modifies the matrilineal system.

The Ashanti manifest great unstability in this respect, since they do not like to sacrifice either line *A* or *B*, though actually line *A* is much weaker than *B*. The mother wishes to be with her daughter and son, while the mother's brother wishes to be with his sister's son, yet they do wish to have co-habitation in their marriage—combining theoretically opposed factors. This is also the case which I found among the Nayar in the transitional stage of the disintegra-

1. These arguments do not mean that all members of a society act in the same way; in any society, considerable variations of residential pattern are found in individual cases. What is important here is the model, and the orientation of ideas of the people, the pattern of which is usually followed by the majority of the people in a given society, at a given time.

2. Among the Khasi, though the authority of the *rng* may keep the account and manage his sister's property, his acquired property through his wife's field or his independent economic activity definitely go to his wife and children.

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K 9 171 182 611 scope; due to uxorilocal marriage, they have no right over his residence and his acquired property. Naturally the maternal uncle becomes far less important than in the Ashanti type.

Among the Yao, which I classified as belonging to the Khasi type, Mitchell states that in spite of the emphasis laid on cross-cousin marriage by his informants, real or classificatory cross-cousins are found in only 15 per cent of 203 first marriages (Mitchell, 1956, p. 210). The functional importance of cross-cousin marriage among the Yao is particularly evident in the minority (headmen of villages or lineages) who practise virilocal marriage[1] in a society where a uxorilocal arrangement is the general rule; as in the case of the Ashanti, cross-cousin marriage functions as a solution to two conflicting tendencies: matrilineality and virilocality. The Trobriands, though they belong to the Ashanti type, demonstrate the same structural analogy to the Khasi type, though in reverse. Among Trobriand commoners there is no preference for cross-cousin marriage. The much discussed cross-cousin marriage of the Trobriand aristocrats should be considered as the exception as has already been examined by Leach (1958, p. 139). In this regard the Yao and the Trobriands produce a picture somewhat similar to the Ashanti type, among the minority of society, though the general practice bears similar features with that of the Khasi type.

It has become clear that cross-cousin marriage is closely related to the type of residence, i.e. virilocality, combined with economic factors. Furthermore, the cross-cousin marriage signifies the political importance of the maternal uncle as lineage head. Thus the Khasi type and the Ashanti type represent alternative arrangements to the differentiation of the core of the functional body, the matrilineal descent group.

## II

K 9 171 182 ● 613 The preceding section has made clear different types of matrilineal systems as far as the *internal structure* of the descent group is concerned. The section deals with the relation of the descent group to the *external organization*.

Both in Garo and the Khasi follow a unilineal system, but they do not have what is called "segmentary lineage" organization, which has been much discussed in the African field. As generally understood,

1. Richards states among the Yao-Cewa group, a cross-cousin marriage is likely to be found between a daughter of a head (male) of a descent group and his sister's son (Richards, 1950, p. 250). Mitchell states that Yao cross-cousin marriage is one of the solutions for the conflict between the principle of uxorilocal marriage and the principle of male leadership of the lineage (Mitchell, 1956? 144).

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Garo AR5



lineage is a corporate unilineal descent group of which the members can establish demonstrable genealogical relationships to each other. According to Firth, "lineage is essentially a unilineal descent group with some corporate functions, normally related by segmentary process to other descent groups of the same type, and with them usually covering the entire society" (1957, p. 4). The Garo and the Khasi can then be said to have the lineage, but to lack its segmentary organization which normally is found in a unilineal society. Both social structures exemplify the importance of the residence as a functional unit, against the wider descent group which may be called the lineage group.

In the case of the Garo, the localized lineage is expressed in terms of the village (or group of villages) whose land bears the name of the localized lineage. However, it is the village which acts as the functional corporate body, the economic and ritual unit, not the group of members of the localized lineage. The village theoretically consists of the members of the two localized lineages, as represented in the headman and his wife respectively. Practically, though it bears the name of a particular lineage to which the wife of the headman belongs, as also usually the majority of the inhabitants, it includes many other lineage members as well as the traditional two lineages. Therefore, the lineage is not, in this sense, an exclusive corporate unit with a ritual and economic function, though it gives a theoretical framework to the structure.

In the case of the Khasi, the lineage is found only as a household scale, centred in the woman, the property owner with members having direct matrilineal kinship ties to the former, such as her brothers, elder sisters, sons and daughters, who may or may not reside in the same household—the members of the *iing*. Beyond this unit (the *iing*) one can hardly find any functional organization based on the descent system. In other words, the lineage becomes a functional unit only at the level of the household, e.g., the lowest level of segmentation of the descent group, and it lacks wider external organization by the same principle. The clan is considered rather as a ritual conception implying exogamy, *not as an organized body of kin*.

These phenomena contrast sharply with the Hopi and the Ashanti social organization, where lineage organization has crucial importance wider than on a household level. Many factors can be considered in this connection. First of all, the locus of property and ceremonial unit are the most distinctive features. Among the Khasi, property and ceremonial units are always found in an *iing*, represented by the youngest daughter's household, while that of the Hopi and the Ashanti are in a wider lineage organization in which members of many households are usually included. The Zuni pueblo seems also similar to that of the Khasi. The difference between the Khasi and Zuni lies

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to the rule of inheritance; the former follows unigeniture (ultimogeniture), while the latter does not. Therefore, the number of members of a Zuni household is naturally larger than that of the Khasi.[1] Against the average number of a Khasi household, four to five, that of the Zuni is seven and a half to eight persons (Kroeber, 1917, p. 124). Among the Khasi, sisters separate through marriage in every generation, leaving the youngest in their natal house; while Zuni sisters may stay together even after their marriages. Kroeber states:

> "The house belongs to the women born of the family. They come into the world, pass their lives, and within the walls they die . . . Now and then a new dwelling may be built by all the inmates, or for a girl of the house by an enterprising husband; but in general the same walls, or repeated ones on the same spot (*ibid.*, pp. 47-48). . . . It is true that a Zuni 'house' often contains what we should regard as two or three households, but so long as it includes only one used hearth, and all natives insist that the two or three households are a single one" (*ibid.*, p. 124).

The internal composition of the household may differ from that of the Khasi, but the household in terms of the important institutionalized unit, is very similar to the Khasi. Li An-che states that "characteristics of a joint household based on the kinship principle stand out very strikingly" (Li, 1937, p. 75). Eggan's statement brings Zuni social organization much closer to the issue. He writes, "In terms of Kroeber's table it would seem that the Zuni tend to equate a lineage with a household, except in cases of recent expansion or budding off" (Eggan, 1950, p. 189). He gives a further illuminating analysis of this point:

> "We have noted that the lineage principle, . . . also provides a mechanism for the inheritance of ceremonial duties and obligations and the transmission and preservation of fetishes and other ceremonial paraphernalia. In Zuni this inheritance is phrased in terms of the household, but it is clear that it is the lineage segment born into the household that is important. This lineage segment, or at least the female line thereof, also owns land and holds it in trust for succeeding generations, to be worked by the men who marry into the household" (*ibid.*, p. 201).

Another similar operation of lineage and household, comparable to that of the Khasi and the Zuni, is found among the Trukese. According to Goodenough (1951):

1. This involves not only the difference of the number of members to a household but also the relation between the members of a descent group. As already discussed, the core of the descent group among the Khasi, is the pair of siblings: the keeper of the property (the youngest sister) and the authority (a brother), not the sibling group altogether (see p. 131) as happens in other matrilineal systems appearing in this discussion. In regard to the unigeniture succession itself, the Garo share the same system as the Khasi, though it appears to operate differently by reason of the structural difference of organization.

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"In aboriginal times they used to be associated with most lineages a dwelling house, *jowai* (p. 67) . . . *jowai* is the corporate property of the lineage or descent line whose women live in it, but it is normally built by their husbands" (p. 68).

Here, it is clear that a household provides the major locus of a lineage. In other words, a lineage is a corporate property group with a common residence. This is also the case of the Nayar *tarwad* and the Minangkabau *parui*, though in these cases the household excludes the spouses of its members, while with the Khasi, the Zuni, and the Trukese the spouses (in most cases, the husbands) share the residence.

Though they may differ in scale and size from one society to another, as well as from one household to another, the functional lineage founded upon residence has thus a similar range in all of these systems. For convenience sake, I tentatively term this type of lineage "household-lineage,"[*] as opposed to that of the Hopi and the Ashanti, which might be termed "segmentary-lineage."

The average number of Khasi and Garo household members is four to five, that of the Zuni seven and a half to eight as stated above, the Trukese in eighteen (three to thirty-four in Romonum Island, according to Goodenough), while the Nayar range from thirty to two hundred. These differences, I think, mostly depend on the economic (and environmental) situation; they should not be regarded as structural, except for the Garo and the Khasi, which, because of the uxigeniture rule, have smaller and fairly uniform households. The wide range of variation in composition which we observe among the Trukese and the Nayar is due in reality to economic and environmental factors: the more favorable the circumstances, the larger the unit.

The co-residential group and the property unit do not always necessarily correspond. One property group may consist of more than two independent residences. But even in such cases, the lineage is likely to be found in a group which formed a co-residential unit in the recent past, and which should be considered as marginal cases, derived from the recent fission of a group—it is a lineage in process of fission not a constant kin-group based on wider organization such as we find among the Ashanti and the Hopi. Usually such a lineage ceases to function shortly after it loses its common property, which usually follows closely upon the fission of the residential unit. Thus, in the course of time a once-recognized lineage group disappears into the common sea of the clan, which represents only a ritual and exogamous unit. In some cases, even this clan loses its function, as happens among the Nayar and the Minangkabau, where the lineage which

[*] It should be noted that it does not mean that the lineage consists of household members, but that the lineage solidarity is found around the range of a household scale.

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corresponds (or corresponded in the near past) to the co-residential property-group itself becomes an exogamic unit, disregarding the wider unit of the clan. Structurally it can be said that in these societies a lineage cannot exercise its full function unless it has a common residence based on a property unit.

In contrast to these societies, I cannot help but think that the Ashanti and the Hopi belong to a different type. Both Fortes and Eggan lay great emphasis on the descent principle, based on the ethnographic data of the Ashanti and of the Hopi respectively. The best examples of statements concerning this issue are the accounts in which both stress their disagreement with Kroeber's argument of 1938 in favour of the priority of local residence relationships over those of descent, under the title of "Basic and secondary patterns of social structure."

Fortes states:

"A lineage cannot easily act as a corporate group if its members can never get together for the conduct of their affairs. It is not surprising therefore to find that the lineage in African societies is generally locally anchored; but it is not necessarily territorially compact or exclusive. A compact nucleus may be enough to act as the local center for a group that is widely dispersed. I think it would be agreed that lineage and locality are independently variable and how they interact depends on other factors in the social structure. As I interpret the evidence, local ties are of secondary significance, *pace* Kroeber, for local ties do not appear to give rise to structural bonds in and of themselves. There must be common political or kinship or economic or ritual interests for structural bonds to emerge. Again spatial dispersion does not immediately put an end to lineage ties or to the ramifying kin ties found in cognatic systems like that of the Lozi. For legal status, property, office and cult act cumulatively to hold dispersed lineages together and scattered kindred" (Fortes, 1953, p. 36).

Eggan states:

"For the Hopi the kinship structure is centered primarily around the lineage; the household relationships are secondary (Eggan, 1950, p. 113) . . .

"Furthermore, it is the lineage and clan, rather than the household group, which is invested with lands and ceremonies and which is considered to own the house itself. Important as are the ties of residence and subsistence associations, they are not the key groupings in Hopi estimation—or in terms of our

"Kroeber explicitly leaves kinship out of account in his analysis of 'basic and secondary patterns of social structure,' but in a sense kinship is more fundamental than either patterns of residence or formal grouping. Our analysis of Hopi kinship has suggested that both the household and the lineage organizations are encompassed in the kinship system. And it is clear that the kinship system is organized in terms of the lineage principle rather than in terms of residence" (*ibid.*, p. 193).

These arguments seem to me to refer more to a difference of social organization than to a theoretical contrast. On the basis of my own

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field work as well as on the accounts of various matrilineal systems. I feel strongly that there must be different types of systems which may be distinguished as "household-lineage" and "segmentary-lineage". Fortes and Eggan postulate the pre-eminence of the descent principle over residence. Though this may be the case among the Ashanti and the Hopi, it does not fit the cases belonging to what I call "household-lineage" type. Firth's argument emphasizing the importance of rights to group membership being associated with locality, fits very well with the latter case. With more precision and subtlety than Kroeber, he argues that "residence by itself does not give title to descent-group membership, but land rights established by descent-group membership tend to remain operational only through residence" (Firth 1957, p. 7).

I believe there are crucial differences between these household-lineage type and segmentary-lineage type organizations. The technical process of fission into segments is similar in both types. But in the former, once a segmented group attains autonomy, the relation between the segments will easily be forgotten after a few generations, as it has no significant social implication. Among these societies, people's genealogical memory outside the residential group is surprisingly poor. This empirical fact also suggests a different structure from that of the segmentary system.

In both types of society the internal organization of a household is the same, but it differs externally. Eggan states that "Kroeber's and Parsons' statements about the lack of system in regard to Zuni kinship indicate judgement from some arbitrary standard" and adds "The concept of the lineage provides a bridge between the household and the clan" (Eggan, *ibid.*, p. 197). I cannot agree with this. In fact, my study of the Garo, the Khasi and the Nayar corresponds very well to the Zuni situation described by Kroeber and Parsons. There are matrilineal systems which lack a bridge between the household and the clan.

Then what is it that makes the difference between the two types of organization in similar unilineal systems? [illegible] on this issue. However, empirical facts show that the household-lineage type organization is likely to be found among more complicated societies or in a society with considerable mobility. This we gather also if we compare the village compositions of the Hopi and the Zuni. In the case of the Khasi, we saw that there was considerable mobility in population even in remote villages, so that we easily understand that in such a condition lineage membership hardly maintained itself. This seems to agree with the view put forth by Fortes on segmentary systems. Fortes says the limits of the spread or span of internal segmentation of the

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660 bor a striking resemblance to that of the Hopi as described by Eggan. The lineage, having segmentary structure, performs strong functions as a land ownership and religious unit. However, from Rattray's account, we understand that all grandchildren of matrilineage as well as children through the male line, are called nana, a term which is also applied to grandparent's generation. This means that the lineal classification does not extend beyond the second generation from Ego; such a classification corresponds to the Zuni type, but not to the Hopi type.

Coming back to the discussion of the correlation between the restricted type of kinship terminology and household lineage, we should consider another important aspect of its bilateral character. In these societies can be observed considerable bilateral tendencies reaching beyond the household-lineage. As I have made clear in the description of the Khasi, the social and economic relationship with outside members of the household are no different towards people who belong to the same descent or clan than towards those who belong to an entirely different kin-group, except as concerns directly related kindred, such as sibling and mother and children. The matrilineal group wider than the eing has no exclusive function at all except avoidance of marriage. In this level of organization, there is no retention of the organizing principle of the matrilineal descent system. For instance, households A, B and C are matrilineally related to each other (A is the original and B and C the outcome of the fusion of A). Such matrilineal links have no exclusive features that mark them off from other households unrelated through the matrilineal descent line; actual matrilineal links are minimized in their value and function in regard to relations between households. Such characteristics of this kind of organization must be correlated with the existence of an inheritance case, in which the matrilineal rule is distorted as I mentioned elsewhere (p. 151). If there is no daughter to succeed the eing, the son can inherit the acquired property of the eing, thus creating by transmission of the property, an entirely new eing (of his wife), in which no matrilineage of his father's lineage, and frequency of patrilineal arrangements as alternatives—transmission of the property on the establishment of a new property-residential group—does not always follow the strict matrilineal line. These facts point to considerable bilateral characteristics outside the household. The relationships among households are not organized upon the matrilineal principle.

660 Kroeber's emphasis on the bilateral character of the Zuni society should be regarded as important in this respect:

"Upon her (Zuni woman) permanent occupancy of the house rests the matrilineal custom of the tribe. But kinship is thoroughly and equally bila-

people remained non-Hindu in their basic beliefs and social customs. Hindu influences are nevertheless predominant in their culture, especially in their way of living which shows a practical adaptability, somewhat similar to the Japanese acceptance of modern western culture without becoming Christian. In my census of Shella village, the people calling themselves 'Hindu' amount to 50 per cent of the total, but they are the recent converts to the Ramakrishna School which established a missionary station at Shella after the Partition. The Christians constitute 50 per cent of the total, most of them having been converted during the last ten years, as in the case of the Ramakrishna School.[1] The real reasons as they were, of these latter conversions to either Ramakrishna or Christianity seem to have been encouraged by the unstable situation of the people resulting from the recent economic depression in the area.

The Partition of India and Pakistan in August 1947, which drew the border a few miles south of Shella village, consistently upset village economy by stopping all trade with Bengal, though a limited amount of trade is allowed with local people at the border. Because of this political change, all the produce of Shella gardens is rotting away for lack of markets, while all of the rice fields were taken by Pakistan. Goods are now come to Shella only from the uplands, carried upon men's shoulders over the most difficult pass, which makes everything very expensive. Many families have sold their gold and other treasures, and some families are facing starvation.[2]

Concerning the conversion to a new religion, an interesting phenomenon is to be observed. The conversion to Christianity or to Ramakrishna is mostly by individual. I found in my census that the wife and husband often belong to different religions. This is a very different picture from the Garo, among whom I always found that the husband and wife belonged to the same religion. The conversion of the husband to Christianity was always followed by that of the wife. I think this reflects the structural differences which influence the actual relationship between the husband and wife. Among these Khasi, instead of the husband and wife, the maternal uncle and his nephews and nieces are mostly of the same religion. The function of the clan, the most important social and religious unit, thus appears also in the conversion to a new religion, stronger than that of a domestic unit.

### Intermarriage

The close economic and cultural contact of the Shella people and the Bengalee is not matched by social contact. The essential barrier between the two peoples is the difference of religion which dominates the entire social order in each society. Though these Khasi own important traders, richer than the neighbouring Hindu peasants, they were considered by the Hindu as outcasts with whom they never shared social activities. Intermarriages were therefore very

* A Khasi woman married to a Garo (cattle-keeper), they live at Shella Bazaar (Shella).

* A Khasi woman has married relation with a Bengalee confined doctor who has resided at Shella for six years. He already has a Bengalee

† These two entirely different missionary activities are competing with each other, and are somewhat related to the political powers within this area.

‡ The state government is doing its best to provide them with additional facilities, for example, providing an transport for the transportation of oranges from Shella to Gauhati and Calcutta. However, such arrangements cannot cure the grave economic loss suffered by the Shella people.